00097686

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

ESSAYS:

COLLECTED AND REPUBLISHED.

97686

THOMAS CARLYLE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON.
CHAPMAN AND HALL, STRAND.
M DCCC XLIV.

00097686

CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

	PAGE
SCHILLER	1
THE NIBELUNGEN LIED	67
GERMAN LITERATURE OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES	140
TAYLOR'S HISTORIC SURVEY OF GERMAN POETRY	215
FRACTIONS.	
I. Tragedy of the Night-Moth	262
II. Cui Bono	264
III. Four Fables	265
IV. The Sower's Song	268
V. Adieu	269
VI. The Beetle	270
VII. To-day	271
VIII. Fortuna	272
CHARACTERISTICS	274
GOETHE'S PORTRAIT	327

APPENDIX.

I. FROM "GERMAN ROMANCE."	
Ludwig Tieck	333
E. T. W. Hoffmann	345
II. NOVELLE	365
II. SCHILLER, GOETHE, AND MADAME DE STAËL	390

MISCELLANIES.

SCHILLER.*

[1831.]

To the student of German Literature, or of Literature in general, these Volumes, purporting to lay open the private intercourse of two men eminent beyond all others of their time in that department, will doubtless be a welcome appearance. Neither Schiller nor Goethe has ever, that we have hitherto seen, written worthlessly on any subject; and the writings here offered us are confidential Letters, relating moreover to a highly important period in the spiritual history, not only of the parties themselves, but of their country likewise; full of topics, high and low, on which far meaner talents than theirs might prove interesting. We have heard and known so much of both these venerated persons; of their friendship, and true co-operation in so many noble endeavours, the fruit of which has long been plain to every one: and now are we to look into the secret constitution and conditions of all this; to trace the

* Fraser's Magazine, No. 14.— *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe, in den Jahren* 1794 *bis* 1805. (Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe in the years 1794-1805). 1st-3d Volumes (1794-1797). Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1828-9.

public result, which is Ideal, down to its roots in the Common; how Poets may live and work poetically among the Prose things of this world, and *Fausts* and *Tells* be written on rag-paper, and with goose-quills, like mere Minerva Novels, and songs by a Person of Quality! Virtuosos have glass bee-hives, which they curiously peep into; but here truly were a far stranger sort of honey-making. Nay, apart from virtuososhiip, or any technical object, what a hold have such things on our universal curiosity as men! If the sympathy we feel with one another is infinite, or nearly so,—in proof of which, do but consider the boundless ocean of Gossip (imperfect, undistilled Biography) which is emitted and imbibed by the human species daily;—if every secret-history, every closed-doors conversation, how trivial soever, has an interest for us, then might the conversation of a Schiller with a Goethe, so rarely do Schillers meet with Goethes among us, tempt Honesty itself into eaves-dropping.

Unhappily the conversation flits away for ever with the hour that witnessed it; and the Letter and Answer, frank, lively, genial as they may be, are only a poor emblem and epitome of it. The living dramatic movement is gone; nothing but the cold historical net-product remains for us. It is true, in every confidential Letter, the writer will, in some measure, more or less directly depict himself: but nowhere is Painting, by pen or pencil, so inadequate as in delineating Spiritual Nature. The Pyramid can be measured in geometric feet, and the draughtsman represents it, with all its environment, on canvass, accurately to the eye; nay, Mont-Blanc is embossed in coloured stucco; and we have his very

type, and miniature fac-simile, in our museums. But for great Men, let him who would know such, pray that he may see them daily face to face: for, in the dim distance, and by the eye of the imagination, our vision, do what we may, will be too imperfect. How pale, thin, ineffectual do the great figures we would fain summon from History rise before us! Scarcely as palpable men does our utmost effort body them forth; oftenest only like Ossian's ghosts, in hazy twilight, with 'stars dim twinkling through their forms.' Our Socrates, our Luther, after all that we have talked and argued of them, are to most of us quite invisible; the Sage of Athens, the Monk of Eisleben; not Persons but Titles. Yet such men, far more than any Alps or Coliseums, are the true world-wonders, which it concerns us to behold clearly, and imprint for ever on our remembrance. Great men are the Fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind; they stand as heavenly Signs, ever-living witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, embodied Possibilities of human nature; which greatness he who has never seen, or rationally conceived of, and with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced, is himself for ever doomed to be little. How many weighty reasons, how many innocent allurements attract our curiosity to such men! We would know them, see them visibly, even as we know and see our like: no hint, no notice that concerns them is superfluous or too small for us. Were Gulliver's Conjuror but here, to recall and revisibly bring back the brave Past, that we might look into it, and scrutinize it at will! But, alas, in Nature there is no such conjuring: the great spirits that have gone before

us can survive only as disembodied Voices; their form and distinctive aspect, outward and even in many respects inward, all whereby they were known as living, breathing men, has passed into another sphere; from which only History, in scanty memorials, can evoke some faint resemblance of it. The more precious, in spite of all imperfections, is such History, are such memorials, that still in some degree preserve what had otherwise been lost without recovery.

For the rest, as to the maxim, often enough inculcated on us, that close inspection will abate our admiration, that only the obscure can be sublime, let us put small faith in it. Here, as in other provinces, it is not knowledge, but a little knowledge, that puffeth up, and for wonder at the thing known substitutes mere wonder at the knower thereof: to a sciolist, the starry heavens revolving in dead mechanism, may be less than a Jacob's vision; but to the Newton they are more; for the same God still dwells enthroned there, and holy Influences, like Angels, still ascend and descend; and this clearer vision of a little but renders the remaining mystery the deeper and more divine. So likewise is it with true spiritual greatness. On the whole, that theory of 'no man being a hero to his valet,' carries us but a little way into the real nature of the case. With a superficial meaning which is plain enough, it essentially holds good only of such heroes as are false, or else of such valets as are too genuine, as are shoulder-knotted and brass-lackered in soul as well as in body: of other sorts it does not hold. Milton was still a hero to the good Elwood. But we dwell not on that mean doctrine which, true or false, may be left to itself the more safely

as in practice it is of little or no immediate import. For were it never so true, yet, unless we preferred huge bugbears to small realities, our practical course were still the same: to inquire, to investigate by all methods, till we saw clearly.

What worth in this biographical point of view, the *Correspondence of Schiller and Goethe* may have, we shall not attempt determining here; the rather as only a portion of the Work, and to judge by the space of time included in it, only a small portion, is yet before us. Nay perhaps its full worth will not become apparent till a future age, when the persons and concerns it treats of shall have assumed their proper relative magnitude, and stand disencumbered, and for ever separated from contemporary trivialities, which, for the present, with their hollow transient bulk, so mar our estimate. Two centuries ago, Leicester and Essex might be the wonders of England; their Kenilworth Festivities and Cadiz Expeditions seemed the great occurrences of that day; but what would we now give, were these all forgotten, and some 'Correspondence between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson' suddenly brought to light!

One valuable quality these Letters of Schiller and Goethe everywhere exhibit, that of truth: whatever we do learn from them, whether in the shape of fact or of opinion, may be relied on as genuine. There is a tone of entire sincerity in that style: a constant natural courtesy nowhere obstructs the right freedom of word or thought; indeed, no ends but honourable ones, and generally of a mutual interest, are before either party; thus neither needs to veil, still less to mask himself from the other; the two self-portraits, so far as they are filled

up, may be looked upon as real likenesses. Perhaps, to most readers, some larger intermixture of what we should call domestic interest, of ordinary human concerns, and the hopes, fears, and other feelings these excite, would have improved the Work; which as it is, not indeed without pleasant exceptions, turns mostly on compositions, and publications, and philosophies; and other such high matters. This, we believe, is a rare fault in modern Correspondences; where generally the opposite fault is complained of, and except mere temporalities, good and evil hap of the corresponding parties, their state of purse, heart, and nervous system, and the moods and humours these give rise to,—little stands recorded for us. It may be, too, that native readers will feel such a want less than foreigners do, whose curiosity in this instance is equally minute, and to whom so many details, familiar enough in the country itself, must be unknown. At all events, it is to be remembered that Schiller and Goethe are, in strict speech, Literary Men; for whom their social life is only as the dwelling-place and outward tabernacle of their spiritual life; which latter is the one thing needful; the other, except in subserviency to this, meriting no attention, or the least possible. Besides, as cultivated men, perhaps even by natural temper, they are not in the habit of yielding to violent emotions of any kind, still less of unfolding and depicting such, by letter, even to closest intimates; a turn of mind which, if it diminished the warmth of their epistolary intercourse, must have increased their private happiness, and so, by their friends, can hardly be regretted. He who wear his heart on his sleeve, will often have to lament alou that daws peck at it: he who does not, will spare him

self such lamenting. Of Rousseau Confessions, whatever value we assign that sort of ware, there is no vestige in this Correspondence.

Meanwhile, many cheerful, honest little domestic touches are given here and there; which we can accept gladly, with no worse censure than wishing that there had been more. But this Correspondence has another and more proper aspect, under which, if rightly considered, it possesses a far higher interest than most domestic delineations could have imparted. It shews us two high, creative, truly poetic minds, unweariedly cultivating themselves, unweariedly advancing from one measure of strength and clearness to another; whereby to such as travel, we say not on the same road, for this few can do, but in the same direction, as all should do, the richest psychological and practical lesson is laid out; from which men of every intellectual degree may learn something, and he that is of the highest degree will probably learn the most. What value lies in this lesson, moreover, may be expected to increase in an increasing ratio as the Correspondence proceeds, and a larger space, with broader differences of advancement, comes into view; especially as respects Schiller, the younger and more susceptive of the two; for whom, in particular, these eleven years may be said to comprise the most important era of his culture; indeed, the whole history of his progress therein, from the time when he first found the right path, and properly became progressive.

But to enter farther on the merits and special qualities of these Letters, which, on all hands, will be regarded as a publication of real value, both intrinsic and

extrinsic, is not our task now. Of the frank, kind, mutually-respectful relation that manifests itself between the two Correspondents; of their several epistolary styles, and the worth of each, and whatever else characterizes this Work as a series of biographical documents, or of philosophical views, we may at some future period have occasion to speak: certain detached speculations and indications will of themselves come before us in the course of our present undertaking. Meanwhile, to British readers, the chief object is not the Letters, but the writers of them. Of Goethe the public already know something: of Schiller less is known, and our wish is to bring him into closer approximation with our readers.

Indeed, had we considered only his importance in German, or we may now say, in European Literature, Schiller might well have demanded an earlier notice in our Journal. As a man of true poetical and philosophical genius, who proved this high endowment both in his conduct, and by a long series of Writings which manifest it to all; nay, even as a man so eminently admired by his nation, while he lived, and whose fame, there and abroad, during the twenty-five years since his decease, has been constantly expanding and confirming itself, he appears with such claims as can belong only to a small number of men. If we have seemed negligent of Schiller, want of affection was nowise the cause. Our admiration for him is of old standing, and has not abated, as it ripened into calm loving estimation. But to English expositors of Foreign Literature, at this epoch, there will be many more pressing duties than that of expounding Schiller. To a considerable extent,

Schiller may be said to expound himself. His greatness is of a simple kind; his manner of displaying it is, for most part, apprehensible to every one.—Besides, of all German Writers, ranking in any such class as his, Klopstock scarcely excepted, he has the least nationality: his character indeed is German, if German mean true, earnest, nobly-humane; but his mode of thought, and mode of utterance, all but the mere vocables of it, are European. Accordingly, it is to be observed, no German Writer has had such acceptance with foreigners; has been so instantaneously admitted into favour, at least any favour which proved permanent. Among the French, for example, Schiller is almost naturalized; translated, commented upon, by men of whom Constant is one; even brought upon the stage, and by a large class of critics vehemently extolled there. Indeed, to the Romanticist class, in all countries, Schiller is naturally the pattern man and great master; as it were, a sort of ambassador and mediator, were mediation possible, between the Old School and the New; pointing to his own Works, as to a glittering bridge, that will lead pleasantly from the Versailles gardening and artificial hydraulics of the one, into the true Ginnistan and Wonderland of the other. With ourselves too, who are troubled with no controversies on Romanticism and Classicism,—the Bowles controversy on Pope having long since evaporated without result, and all critical guild-brethren now working diligently, with one accord, in the calmer sphere of Vapidism, or even Nullism,—Schiller is no less universally esteemed by persons of any feeling for poetry. To readers of German, and these are increasing every-

where a hundred fold, he is one of the earliest studies; and the dullest cannot study him without some perception of his beauties. For the Un-German, again, we have Translations in abundance and superabundance; through which, under whatever distortion, however shorn of his beams, some image of this poetical sun must force itself; and in susceptive hearts, awaken love, and a desire for more immediate insight. So that now, we suppose, anywhere in England, a man who denied that Schiller was a Poet would himself be, from every side, declared a Prosaist, and thereby summarily enough put to silence.

All which being so, the weightiest part of our duty, that of preliminary pleading for Schiller, of asserting rank and excellence for him while a stranger, and to judges suspicious of counterfeits, is taken off our hands. The knowledge of his works is silently and rapidly proceeding; in the only way by which true knowledge can be attained, by loving study of them in many an inquiring, candid mind. Moreover, as remarked above, Schiller's works, generally speaking, require little commentary: for a man of such excellence, for a true Poet, we should say that his worth lies singularly open; nay, in great part of his writings, beyond such open, universally recognisable worth, there is no other to be sought.

Yet doubtless if he is a Poet, a genuine interpreter of the Invisible, Criticism will have a deeper duty to discharge for him. Every Poet, be his outward lot what it may, finds himself born in the midst of Prose; he has to struggle from the littleness and obstruction of an Actual world, into the freedom and infinitude of an

Ideal; and the history of such struggle, which is the history of his life, cannot be other than instructive. His is a high, laborious, unrequited, or only self-requited endeavour; which, however, by the law of his being, he is compelled to undertake, and must prevail in, or be permanently wretched; nay the more wretched, the nobler his gifts are. For it is the deep, inborn claim of his whole spiritual nature, and will not and must not go unanswered. His youthful unrest, that 'unrest of genius,' often so wayward in its character, is the dim anticipation of this; the mysterious, all-powerful mandate, as from Heaven, to prepare himself, to purify himself, for the vocation wherewith he is called. And yet how few can fulfil this mandate, how few earnestly give heed to it! Of the thousand jingling dilettanti, whose jingle dies with the hour which it harmlessly or hurtfully amused, we say nothing here: to these, as to the mass of men, such calls for spiritual perfection speak only in whispers, drowned without difficulty in the din and dissipation of the world. But even for the Byron, for the Burns, whose ear is quick for celestial messages, in whom 'speaks the prophesying spirit,' in awful prophetic voice, how hard is it to 'take no counsel with flesh and blood,' and instead of living and writing for the Day that passes over them, live and write for the Eternity that rests and abides over them; instead of living commodiously in the Half, the Reputable, the Plausible, 'to live resolutely in the Whole, the Good, the True!'* Such Halfness, such halting between two opinions, such painful, altogether fruitless negotiating

* *Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben.*—GOETHE.

between Truth and Falsehood, has been the besetting sin, and chief misery, of mankind in all ages. Nay, in our age, it has christened itself Moderation, a prudent taking of the middle course; and passes current among us as a virtue. How virtuous it is, the withered condition of many a once ingenuous nature that has lived by this method; the broken or breaking heart of many a noble nature that could not live by it,—speak aloud, did we but listen.

And now, when from among so many shipwrecks and misventures one goodly vessel comes to land, we joyfully survey its rich cargo, and hasten to question the crew on the fortunes of their voyage. Among the crowd of uncultivated and miscultivated writers, the high, pure Schiller stands before us with a like distinction. We ask: How was this man successful? From what peculiar point of view did he attempt penetrating the secret of spiritual Nature? From what region of Prose rise into Poetry? Under what outward accidents; with what inward faculties; by what methods; with what result?

For any thorough or final answer to such questions, it is evident enough, neither our own means, nor the present situation of our readers, in regard to this matter, are in any measure adequate. Nevertheless, the imperfect beginning must be made, before the perfect result can appear. Some slight far-off glance over the character of the man, as he looked and lived, in Action and in Poetry, will not, perhaps, be unacceptable from us: for such as know little of Schiller, it may be an opening of the way to better knowledge; for such as are already familiar with him, it may be a stating in

words of what they themselves have often thought; and welcome, therefore, as the confirming testimony of a second witness.

Of Schiller's personal history there are accounts in various accessible publications; so that, we suppose, no formal Narrative of his Life, which may now be considered generally known, is necessary here. Such as are curious on the subject, and still uninformed, may find some satisfaction in the *Life of Schiller* (London, 1824); in the *Vie de Schiller*, prefixed to the French Translation of his Dramatic Works; in the *Account of Schiller*, prefixed to the English Translation of his Thirty-Years War (Edinburgh, 1828); and, doubtless, in many other Essays, known to us only by title. Nay, in the survey we propose to make of his character, practical as well as speculative, the main facts of his outward history will of themselves come to light.

Schiller's Life is emphatically a literary one; that of a man existing only for Contemplation; guided forward by the pursuit of ideal things, and seeking and finding his true welfare therein. A singular simplicity characterizes it, a remoteness from whatever is called business; an aversion to the tumults of business, an indifference to its prizes, grows with him from year to year. He holds no office; scarcely for a little while an University Professorship; he covets no promotion; has no stock of money; and shews no discontent with these arrangements. Nay when permanent sickness, continual pain of body, is added to them, he still seems happy: these last fifteen years of his life are, spiritually considered, the clearest and most productive

of all. We might say, there is something priest-like in that Life of his: under quite another colour and environment, yet with aims differing in form rather than in essence, it has a priest-like stillness, a priest-like purity; nay, if for the Catholic Faith, we substitute the Ideal of Art, and for Convent Rules, Moral or Æsthetic Laws, it has even something of a monastic character. By the three monastic vows he was not bound: yet vows of as high and difficult a kind, both to do and to forbear, he had taken on him; and his happiness and whole business lay in observing them. Thus immured, not in cloisters of stone and mortar, yet in cloisters of the mind, which separate him as impassably from the vulgar, he works and meditates only on what we may call Divine things; his familiar talk, his very recreations, the whole actings and fancyings of his daily existence, tend thither.

As in the life of a Holy Man, too, so in that of Schiller, there is but one great epoch: that of taking on him these Literary Vows; of finally extricating himself from the distractions of the world, and consecrating his whole future days to Wisdom. What lies before this epoch, and what lies after it, have two altogether different characters. The former is worldly, and occupied with worldly vicissitudes; the latter is spiritual, of calm tenour; marked to himself only by his growth in inward clearness, to the world only by the peaceable fruits of this. It is to the first of these periods that we shall here chiefly direct ourselves.

In his parentage, and the circumstances of his earlier years, we may reckon him fortunate. His parents, indeed, are not rich, nor even otherwise independent: yet

neither are they meanly poor; and warm affection, a true honest character, ripened in both into religion, not without an openness for knowledge, and even considerable intellectual culture, makes amends for every defect. The Boy, too, is himself of a character in which, to the observant, lies the richest promise. A modest, still nature, apt for all instruction in heart or head; flashes of liveliness, of impetuosity, from time to time breaking through. That little anecdote of the Thunder-storm is so graceful in its littleness, that one cannot but hope it may be authentic.

'Once, it is said, during a tremendous thunder-storm, his father missed him in the young group within doors; none of the sisters could tell what was become of Fritz, and the old man grew at length so anxious that he was forced to go out in quest of him. Fritz was scarcely past the age of infancy, and knew not the dangers of a scene so awful. His father found him at last, in a solitary place of the neighbourhood, perched on the branch of a tree, gazing at the tempestuous face of the sky, and watching the flashes as in succession they spread their lurid gleam over it. To the reprimands of his parent, the whimpering truant pleaded in extenuation, "that the Lightning was so beautiful, and he wished to see where it was coming from!"'

In his village-school he reads the Classics with diligence, without relish; at home, with far deeper feelings, the Bible; and already his young heart is caught with that mystic grandeur of the Hebrew Prophets. His devout nature, moulded by the pious habits of his parents, inclines him to be a clergyman: a clergyman, indeed, he proved; only the Church he ministered in was the Catholic, a far more Catholic than that false

Romish one. But already in his ninth year, not without rapturous amazement, and a lasting remembrance, he had seen the 'splendours of the Ludwigsburg Theatre;' and so, unconsciously, cast a glimpse into that world, where, by accident or natural preference, his own genius was one day to work out its noblest triumphs.

Before the end of his boyhood, however, begins a far harsher era for Schiller; wherein, under quite other nurture, other faculties were to be developed in him. He must enter on a scene of oppression, distortion, isolation; under which, for the present, the fairest years of his existence are painfully crushed down. But this too has its wholesome influences on him; for there is in genius that alchymy which converts all metals into gold; which from suffering educes strength, from error clearer wisdom, from all things good.

'The Duke of Würtemberg had lately founded a free seminary for certain branches of professional education: it was first set up at Solitude, one of his country residences; and had now been transferred to Stuttgard, where, under an improved form, and with the name of *Karls-schule*, we believe it still exists. The Duke proposed to give the sons of his military officers a preferable claim to the benefits of this institution; and having formed a good opinion both of Schiller and his father, he invited the former to profit by this opportunity. The offer occasioned great embarrassment: the young man and his parents were alike determined in favour of the Church, a project with which this new one was inconsistent. Their embarrassment was but increased, when the Duke, on learning the nature of their scruples, desired them to think well before they decided. It was out of fear, and with reluctance that his proposal was accepted. Schiller enrolled himself in 1773; and turned, with a heavy

heart, from freedom and cherished hopes, to Greek, and seclusion, and Law.

'His anticipations proved to be but too just: the six years which he spent in this Establishment were the most harassing and comfortless of his life. The Stuttgard system of education seems to have been formed on the principle, not of cherishing and correcting nature, but of rooting it out, and supplying its place by something better. The process of teaching and living was conducted with the stiff formality of military drilling; everything went on by statute and ordinance; there was no scope for the exercise of free-will, no allowance for the varieties of original structure. A scholar might possess what instincts or capacities he pleased; the "regulations of the school" took no account of this; he must fit himself into the common mould, which, like the old Giant's bed, stood there, appointed by superior authority, to be filled alike by the great and the little. The same strict and narrow course of reading and composition was marked out for each beforehand, and it was by stealth if he read or wrote anything beside. Their domestic economy was regulated in the same spirit as their preceptorial: it consisted of the same sedulous exclusion of all that could border on pleasure, or give any exercise to choice. The pupils were kept apart from the conversation or sight of any person but their teachers; none ever got beyond the precincts of despotism to snatch even a fearful joy; their very amusements proceeded by the word of command.

'How grievous all this must have been it is easy to conceive. To Schiller it was more grievous than to any other. Of an ardent and impetuous, yet delicate nature, whilst his discontentment devoured him internally, he was too modest to give it the relief of utterance by deeds or words. Locked up within himself, he suffered deeply, but without complaining. Some of his Letters written during this period have been preserved: they exhibit the ineffectual

struggles of a fervid and busy mind, veiling its many chagrins under a certain dreary patience, which only shews them more painfully. He pored over his lexicons, and grammars, and insipid tasks, with an artificial composure; but his spirit pined within him like a captive's, when he looked forth into the cheerful world, or recollected the affection of parents, the hopes and frolicsome enjoyments of past years.'

Youth is to all the glad season of life; but often only by what it hopes, not by what it attains, or what it escapes. In these sufferings of Schiller's, many a one may say, there is nothing unexampled: could not the history of every Eton Scholar, of every poor Midshipman, with his rudely-broken domestic ties, his privations, persecutions, and cheerless solitude of heart, equal or outdo them? In respect of these its palpable hardships perhaps it might; and be still very miserable. But the hardship which presses heaviest on Schiller lies deeper than all these; out of which the natural fire of almost any young heart will, sooner or later, rise victorious. His worst oppression is an oppression of the moral sense; a fettering not of the Desires only, but of the pure reasonable Will: for besides all outward sufferings, his mind is driven from its true aim, dimly yet invincibly felt to be the true one; and turned, by sheer violence, into one which it feels to be false. Not in Law with its profits and dignities; not in Medicine, which he willingly, yet still hopelessly exchanges for Law; not in the routine of any marketable occupation, how gainful or honoured soever, can his soul find content and a home: only in some far purer and higher reign of Activity; for which he has yet no name;

which he once fancied to be the Church, which at length he discovers to be Poetry. Nor is this any transient boyish wilfulness, but a deep-seated, earnest, ineradicable longing, the dim purpose of his whole inner man. Nevertheless as a transient boyish wilfulness his teachers must regard it, and deal with it; and not till after the fiercest contest, and a clear victory, will its true nature be recognised. Herein lay the sharpest sting of Schiller's ill fortune; his whole mind is wrenched asunder; he has no rallying point in his misery; he is suffering and toiling for a wrong object. 'A singular 'miscalculation of Nature,' he says long afterwards, 'had combined my poetical tendencies with the place 'of my birth. Any disposition to Poetry did violence 'to the laws of the Institution where I was educated, 'and contradicted the plan of its founder. For eight 'years, my enthusiasm struggled with military disci-'pline; but the passion for Poetry is vehement and 'fiery as a first love. What discipline was meant to 'extinguish, it blew into a flame. To escape from 'arrangements that tortured me, my heart sought re-'fuge in the world of ideas, when as yet I was unac-'quainted with the world of realities, from which iron 'bars excluded me.'

Doubtless Schiller's own prudence had already taught him that in order to live poetically, it was first requisite to live; that he should and must, as himself expresses it, 'forsake the balmy climate of Pindus for the Green-land of a barren and dreary science of terms.' But the dull work of this Greenland once accomplished, he might rationally hope that his task was done; that the 'leisure gained by superior diligence' would be his

own, for Poetry, or whatever else he pleased. Truly, it was 'intolerable and degrading to be hemmed in still farther by the caprices of severe and formal pedagogues.' No wonder that Schiller 'brooded gloomily' over his situation. But what was to be done? 'Many plans 'he formed for deliverance: sometimes he would escape 'in secret to catch a glimpse of the free and busy 'world, to him forbidden: sometimes he laid schemes 'for utterly abandoning a place which he abhorred, and 'trusting to fortune for the rest.' But he is young, inexperienced, unprovided; without help, or counsel: there is nothing to be done, but endure.

'Under such corroding and continual vexations,' says his Biographer, 'an ordinary spirit would have sunk at length; would have gradually given up its loftier aspirations, and sought refuge in vicious indulgence, or at best have sullenly harnessed itself into the yoke, and plodded through existence; weary, discontented, and broken, ever casting back a hankering look on the dreams of his youth, and ever without power to realize them. But Schiller was no ordinary character, and did not act like one. Beneath a cold and simple exterior, dignified with no artificial attractions, and marred in its native amiableness by the incessant obstruction, the isolation and painful destitutions under which he lived, there was concealed a burning energy of soul, which no obstruction could extinguish. The hard circumstances of his fortune had prevented the natural development of his mind; his faculties had been cramped and misdirected; but they had gathered strength by opposition and the habit of self-dependence which it encouraged. His thoughts, unguided by a teacher, had sounded into the depths of his own nature and the mysteries of his own fate; his feelings and passions, unshared by any other heart, had been driven back upon his

own; where, like the volcanic fire that smoulders and fuses in secret, they accumulated till their force grew irresistible.

'Hitherto Schiller had passed for an unprofitable, a discontented, and a disobedient Boy: but the time was now come when the gyves of school-discipline could no longer cripple and distort the giant might of his nature: he stood forth as a Man, and wrenched asunder his fetters with a force that was felt at the extremities of Europe. The publication of the *Robbers* forms an era not only in Schiller's history, but in the literature of the World; and there seems no doubt that, but for so mean a cause as the perverted discipline of the Stuttgard school, we had never seen this tragedy. Schiller commenced it in his nineteenth year; and the circumstances under which it was composed are to be traced in all its parts.

'Translations of the work soon appeared in almost all the languages of Europe,* and were read in almost all of them with a deep interest, compounded of admiration and aversion, according to the relative proportions of sensibility and judgment in the various minds which contemplated the subject. In Germany, the enthusiasm which the *Robbers* excited was extreme. The young author had burst upon the world like a meteor; and surprise, for a time, suspended the power of cool and rational criticism. In the ferment produced by the universal discussion of this single topic, the poet was magnified above his natural dimensions, great as they were: and though the general sentence was loudly in his favour, yet he found detractors as well as praisers, and both equally beyond the limits of moderation.

* Our English translation, one of the washiest, was executed (we have been told) in Edinburgh by a 'Lord of Session,' otherwise not unknown in Literature; who went to work under deepest concealment, lest evil might befall him. The confidential Devil, now an Angel, who mysteriously carried him the proof-sheets, is our informant.

'But the tragedy of the *Robbers* produced for its Author some consequences of a kind much more sensible than these. We have called it the signal of Schiller's deliverance from school-tyranny and military constraint; but its operation in this respect was not immediate. At first it seemed to involve him more deeply than before. He had finished the original sketch of it in 1778; but for fear of offence, he kept it secret till his medical studies were completed. These, in the mean time, he had pursued with sufficient assiduity to merit the usual honours. In 1780, he had, in consequence, obtained the post of Surgeon to the regiment *Augé*, in the Wurtemberg army. This advancement enabled him to complete his project,—to print the *Robbers* at his own expense; not being able to find any bookseller that would undertake it. The nature of the work, and the universal interest it awakened, drew attention to the private circumstances of the Author, whom the *Robbers*, as well as other pieces of his writing that had found their way into the periodical publications of the time, sufficiently shewed to be no common man. Many grave persons were offended at the vehement sentiments expressed in the *Robbers;* and the unquestioned ability with which these extravagances were expressed but made the matter worse. To Schiller's superiors, above all, such things were inconceivable; he might perhaps be a very great genius, but was certainly a dangerous servant for His Highness, the Grand Duke of Würtemberg. Officious people mingled themselves in the affair: nay, the graziers of the Alps were brought to bear upon it. The Grisons' magistrates, it appeared, had seen the book, and were mortally huffed at their people's being there spoken of, according to a Swabian adage, as *common highwaymen.** They com-

* The obnoxious passage has been carefully expunged from subsequent editions. It was in the third Scene of the second Act. Spiegelberg, discoursing with Razmann, observes, "An honest man

plained in the *Hamburg Correspondent;* and a sort of jackall, at Ludwigsburg, one Walter, whose name deserves to be thus kept in mind, volunteered to plead their cause before the Grand Duke.

'Informed of all these circumstances, the Grand Duke expressed his disapprobation of Schiller's poetical labours in the most unequivocal terms. Schiller was at length summoned before him; and it then turned out, that His Highness was not only dissatisfied with the moral or political errors of the work, but scandalised moreover at its want of literary merit. In this latter respect, he was kind enough to proffer his own services. But Schiller seems to have received the proposal with no sufficient gratitude; and the interview passed without advantage to either party. It terminated in the Duke's commanding Schiller to abide by medical subjects: or at least, to beware of writing any more poetry, without submitting it to *his* inspection.

* * * * *

'Various new mortifications awaited Schiller. It was in vain that he discharged the humble duties of his station with the most strict fidelity, and even, it is said, with superior skill: he was a suspected person, and his most innocent actions were misconstrued, his slightest faults were visited with the full measure of official severity. * * * His free spirit shrank at the prospect of wasting its strength in strife against the pitiful constraints, the minute and endless per-

---

you may form of windle-straws; but to make a rascal you must have grist: besides, there is a national genius in it,—a certain rascal-climate, so to speak." In the first Edition there was added, "*Go to the Grisons, for instance; that is what I call the Thief's Athens.*" The patriot who stood forth, on this occasion, for the honour of the Grisons, to deny this weighty charge, and denounce the crime of making it, was not Dogberry or Verges, but 'one of the noble family of Salis.'

secutions of men, who knew him not, yet had his fortune in their hands: the idea of dungeons and jailors haunted and tortured his mind; and the means of escaping them, the renunciation of poetry, the source of all his joy, if likewise of many woes, the radiant guiding-star of his turbid and obscure existence, seemed a sentence of death to all that was dignified, and delightful, and worth retaining, in his character. * * * With the natural feeling of a young author, he had ventured to go in secret, and witness the first representation of his Tragedy, at Manheim. His incognito did not conceal him; he was put under arrest, during a week, for this offence: and as the punishment did not deter him from again transgressing in a similar manner, he learned that it was in contemplation to try more rigorous measures with him. Dark hints were given to him of some exemplary as well as imminent severity: and Dalberg's aid, the sole hope of averting it by quiet means, was distant and dubious. Schiller saw himself reduced to extremities. Beleagured with present distresses, and the most horrible forebodings, on every side; roused to the highest pitch of indignation, yet forced to keep silence, and wear the face of patience, he could endure this maddening constraint no longer. He resolved to be free, at whatever risk; to abandon advantages which he could not buy at such a price; to quit his stepdame home, and go forth, though friendless and alone, to seek his fortune in the great market of life. Some foreign Duke or Prince was arriving at Stuttgard; and all the people were in movement, witnessing the spectacle of his entrance: Schiller seized this opportunity of retiring from the city, careless whither he went, so he got beyond the reach of turnkeys, and Grand Dukes, and commanding officers. It was in the month of October, 1782, his twenty-third year.'*

* Life of Schiller. Part I.

Such were the circumstances under which Schiller rose to manhood. We see them permanently influence his character; but there is also a strength in himself which on the whole triumphs over them. The kindly and the unkindly alike lead him towards the goal. In childhood, the most unheeded, but by far the most important era of existence,—as it were, the still Creation-days of the whole future man,—he had breathed the only wholesome atmosphere, a soft atmosphere of affection and joy: the invisible seeds which are one day to ripen into clear Devoutness, and all humane Virtue, are happily sown in him. Not till he has gathered force for resistance, does the time of contradiction, of being 'purified by suffering,' arrive. For this contradiction too we have to thank those Stuttgard Schoolmasters and their purblind Duke. Had the system they followed been a milder, more reasonable one, we should not indeed have altogether lost our Poet, for the Poetry lay in his inmost soul, and could not remain unuttered; but we might well have found him under a far inferior character: not dependent on himself and truth, but dependent on the world and its gifts; not standing on a native, everlasting basis, but on an accidental, transient one.

In Schiller himself, as manifested in these emergencies, we already trace the chief features which distinguish him through life. A tenderness, a sensitive delicacy, aggravated under that harsh treatment, issues in a certain shyness and reserve: which, as conjoined moreover with habits of internal and not of external activity, might in time have worked itself, had his natural temper been less warm and affectionate, into

timorous self-seclusion, dissociality, and even positive misanthropy. Nay, generally viewed, there is much in Schiller at this epoch that to a careless observer might have passed for weakness; as indeed, for such observers, weakness and fineness of nature are easily confounded. One element of strength, however, and the root of all strength, he throughout evinces: he wills one thing, and knows what he wills. His mind has a purpose, and still better, a right purpose. He already loves true spiritual Beauty, with his whole heart and his whole soul; and for the attainment, for the pursuit of this, is prepared to make all sacrifices. As a dim instinct, under vague forms, this aim first appears; gains force with his force, clearness in the opposition it must conquer; and at length declares itself, with a peremptory emphasis which will admit of no contradiction.

As a mere piece of literary history, these passages of Schiller's life are not without interest: this is a 'persecution for conscience-sake,' such as has oftener befallen heresy in Religion, than heresy in Literature; a blind struggle to extinguish, by physical violence, the inward celestial light of a human soul; and here in regard to Literature, as in regard to Religion it always is, an ineffectual struggle. Doubtless, as religious Inquisitors have often done, those secular Inquisitors meant honestly in persecuting; and since the matter went well in spite of them, their interference with it may be forgiven and forgotten. We have dwelt the longer on these proceedings of theirs, because they bring us to the grand crisis of Schiller's history, and for the first time shew us his will decisively asserting itself, decisively pronouncing the law whereby his whole future life is to

be governed. He himself says, he 'went empty away; empty in purse and hope.' Yet the mind that dwelt in him was still there with its gifts; and the task of his existence now lay undivided before him. He is henceforth a Literary Man; and need appear in no other character. 'All my connexions,' he could ere long say, 'are now dissolved. The public is now all to me; my 'study, my sovereign, my confident. To the public 'alone I from this time belong; before this and no other 'tribunal will I place myself; this alone do I reverence 'and fear. Something majestic hovers before me, as I 'determine now to wear no other fetters but the sen-'tence of the world, to appeal to no other throne but 'the soul of man.'*

In his subsequent life, with all varieties of outward fortune, we find a noble inward unity. That love of Literature, and that resolution to abide by it at all hazards, do not forsake him. He wanders through the world; looks at it under many phases; mingles in the joys of social life; is a husband, father; experiences all the common destinies of man; but the same 'radiant guiding-star' which, often obscured, had led him safe through the perplexities of his youth, now shines on him with unwavering light. In all relations and conditions Schiller is blameless, amiable; he is even little tempted to err. That high purpose after spiritual perfection, which with him was a love of Poetry, and an unwearied active love, is itself, when pure and supreme, the necessary parent of good conduct, as of noble feeling. With all men it should be pure and supreme; for

* Preface to the *Thalia*.

in one or the other shape it is the true end of man's life. Neither in any man is it ever wholly obliterated; with the most, however, it remains a passive sentiment, an idle wish. And even with the small residue of men, in whom it attains some measure of activity, who would be Poets in act or word, how seldom is it the sincere and highest purpose, how seldom unmixed with vulgar ambition, and low, mere earthly aims, which distort or utterly pervert its manifestations! With Schiller, again, it was the one thing needful; the first duty, for which all other duties worked together, under which all other duties quietly prospered, as under their rightful sovereign. Worldly preferment, fame itself, he did not covet: yet of fame he reaps the most plenteous harvest; and of worldly goods what little he wanted is in the end made sure to him. His mild, honest character everywhere gains him friends: that upright, peaceful, simple life is honourable in the eyes of all; and they who know him the best love him the most.

Perhaps among all the circumstances of Schiller's literary life, there was none so important for him as his connexion with Goethe. To use our old figure, we might say, that if Schiller was a Priest, then was Goethe the Bishop from whom he first acquired clear spiritual light, by whose hands he was ordained to the priesthood. Their friendship has been much celebrated, and deserved to be so: it is a pure relation; unhappily too rare in Literature; where if a Swift and Pope can even found an imperious Duumvirate, on little more than mutually-tolerated pride, and part the spoils for some time without quarrelling, it is thought a credit. Seldom do men combine so steadily and warmly for

such purposes, which when weighed in the economic balance are but gossamer. It appears also that preliminary difficulties stood in the way; prepossessions of some strength had to be conquered on both sides. For a number of years, the two, by accident or choice, never met, and their first interview scarcely promised any permanent approximation. 'On the whole,' says Schiller, 'this personal meeting has not at all diminished the 'idea, great as it was, which I had previously formed of 'Goethe; but I doubt whether we shall ever come into 'close communication with each other. Much that still 'interests me has already had its epoch with him. His 'whole nature is, from its very origin, otherwise constructed than mine; his world is not my world; our 'modes of conceiving things appear to be essentially 'different. From such a combination no secure substantial intimacy can result.'

Nevertheless, in spite of far graver prejudices on the part of Goethe,—to say nothing of the poor jealousies which in another man so circumstanced would openly or secretly have been at work,—a secure substantial intimacy did result; manifesting itself by continual good offices, and interrupted only by death. If we regard the relative situation of the parties, and their conduct in this matter, we must recognise in both of them no little social virtue; at all events, a deep disinterested love of worth. In the case of Goethe, more especially, who, as the elder and everyway greater of the two, has little to expect in comparison with what he gives, this friendly union, had we space to explain its nature and progress, would give new proof that, as poor Jung Stilling also experienced, 'the man's heart, which few

'know, is as true and noble as his genius, which all 'know.' By Goethe, and this even before the date of their friendship, Schiller's outward interests had been essentially promoted: he was introduced, under that sanction, into the service of Weimar, to an academic office, to a pension; his whole way was made smooth for him. In spiritual matters, this help, or rather let us say co-operation, for it came not in the shape of help, but of reciprocal service, was of still more lasting consequence. By the side of his friend, Schiller rises into the highest regions of Art he ever reached; and in all worthy things is sure of sympathy, of one wise judgment amid a crowd of unwise ones, of one helpful hand amid many hostile. Thus outwardly and inwardly assisted and confirmed, he henceforth goes on his way with new steadfastness, turning neither to the right hand, nor to the left; and while days are given him, devotes them wholly to his best duty. It is rare that one man can do so much for another, can permanently benefit another; so mournfully, in giving and receiving, as in most charitable affections and finer movements of our nature, are we all held in by that paltry vanity, which, under reputable names, usurps, on both sides, a sovereignty it has no claim to. Nay, many times, when our friend would honestly help us, and strives to do it, yet will he never bring himself to understand what we really need, and so to forward us on our own path; but insists more simply on our taking his path, and leaves us as incorrigible because we will not and cannot. Thus men are solitary among each other; no one will help his neighbour; each has even to assume a defensive attitude lest his neighbour hinder him!

Of Schiller's zealous, entire devotedness to Literature we have already spoken as of his crowning virtue, and the great source of his welfare. With what ardour he pursued this object his whole life, from the earliest stage of it, had given proof: but the clearest proof, clearer even than that youthful self-exile, was reserved for his later years, when a lingering, incurable disease had laid on him its new and ever-galling burden. At no period of Schiller's history does the native nobleness of his character appear so decidedly, as now in this season of silent unwitnessed heroism, when the dark enemy dwelt within himself, unconquerable, yet ever, in all other struggles, to be kept at bay. We have medical evidence that during the last fifteen years of his life, not a moment could have been free of pain. Yet he utters no complaint. In this 'Correspondence with Goethe' we see him cheerful, laborious; scarcely speaking of his maladies, and then only historically, in the style of a third party, as it were, calculating what force and length of days might still remain at his disposal. Nay his highest poetical performances, we may say all that are truly poetical, belong to this era. If we recollect how many poor valetudinarians, Rousseaus, Cowpers, and the like, men otherwise of fine endowments, dwindle under the influence of nervous disease, into pining wretchedness, some into madness itself; and then that Schiller, under the like influence, wrote some of his deepest speculations, and all his genuine dramas, from *Wallenstein* to *Wilhelm Tell*, we shall the better estimate his merit.

It has been said that only in Religion, or something equivalent to Religion, can human nature support itself

under such trials. But Schiller too had his Religion; was a Worshipper, nay, as we have often said, a Priest; and so in his earthly sufferings wanted not a heavenly stay. Without some such stay his life might well have been intolerable; stript of the Ideal, what remained for him in the Real was but a poor matter. Do we talk of his 'happiness?' Alas, what is the loftiest flight of genius, the finest frenzy that ever for moments united Heaven with Earth, to the perennial never-failing joys of a digestive-apparatus thoroughly eupeptic? Has not the turtle-eating man an eternal sunshine of the breast? Does not his Soul,—which, as in some Sclavonic dialects, means his Stomach,—sit for ever at its ease, enwrapped in warm condiments, amid spicy odours; enjoying the past, the present, and the future; and only awakening from its soft trance to the sober certainty of a still higher bliss each meal-time,—three or even four visions of Heaven in the space of one solar day! While for the sick man of genius, 'whose world is of the 'mind, ideal, internal; when the mildew of lingering 'disease has struck that world, and begun to blacken 'and consume its beauty, what remains but despond-'ency, and bitterness, and desolate sorrow felt and anti-'cipated to the end?'

'Wo to him,' continues this Jeremiah, 'if his will likewise falter, if his resolution fail, and his spirit bend its neck to the yoke of this new enemy! Idleness and a disturbed imagination will gain the mastery of him, and let loose their thousand fiends to harass him, to torment him into madness. Alas! the bondage of Algiers is freedom compared with this of the sick man of genius, whose heart has fainted, and sunk beneath its load. His clay dwelling is changed

into a gloomy prison; every nerve has become an avenue of disgust or anguish, and the soul sits within in her melancholy loneliness, a prey to the spectres of despair, or stupified with excess of suffering; doomed, as it were, to a life-in-death, to a consciousness of agonized existence, without the consciousness of power which should accompany it. Happily death, or entire fatuity at length puts an end to such scenes of ignoble misery, which, however, ignoble as they are, we ought to view with pity rather than contempt.'*

Yet on the whole, we say, it is a shame for the man of genius to complain. Has he not a 'light from Heaven' within him, to which the splendour of all earthly thrones and principalities is but darkness? And the head that wears such a crown grudges to lie uneasy? If that same 'light from Heaven,' shining through the falsest media, supported Syrian Simon through all weather on his sixty-feet Pillar, or the still more wonderful Eremite, who walled himself, for life, up to the chin, in stone and mortar; how much more should it do, when shining direct, and pure from all intermixture? Let the modern Priest of Wisdom either suffer his small persecutions and inflictions, though sickness be of the number, in patience, or admit that ancient fanatics and bedlamites were truer worshippers than he.

A foolish controversy on this subject of Happiness now and then occupies some intellectual dinner-party; speculative gentlemen we have seen more than once, almost forget their wine in arguing whether Happiness was the chief end of man. The most cry out, with Pope: 'Happiness, our being's end and aim;' and ask whether it is even conceivable that we should follow

* Life of Schiller, p. 167.

any other. How comes it, then, cry the Opposition, that the gross are happier than the refined; that even though we know them to be happier, we would not change places with them? Is it not written, Increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow? And yet also written, in characters still more ineffaceable, Pursue knowledge, attain clear vision, as the beginning of all good? Were your doctrine right, for what should we struggle with our whole might, for what pray to Heaven, if not that the 'malady of thought' might be utterly stifled within us, and a power of digestion and secretion, to which that of the tiger were trifling, be imparted instead thereof? Whereupon the others deny that thought is a malady; that increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow; that Aldermen have a sunnier life than Aristotle's, though the Stagyrite himself died exclaiming, *Fœdè mundum intravi, anxius vixi, perturbatus morior*, &c.: and thus the argument circulates, and the bottles stand still.

So far as that Happiness-question concerns the symposia of speculative gentlemen,—the rather as it really is a good enduring hacklog whereon to chop logic, for those so minded,—we with great willingness leave it resting on its own bottom. But there are earnest natures for whom Truth is no plaything, but the staff of life; men whom the 'solid reality of things' will not carry forward; who when the 'inward voice' is silent in them, are powerless, nor will the loud huzzaing of millions supply the want of it. To these men seeking anxiously for guidance; feeling that did they once clearly see the right, they would follow it cheerfully to weal or to wo, comparatively careless which;

to these men the question, what is the proper aim of man, has a deep and awful interest.

For the sake of such, it may be remarked that the origin of this argument, like that of every other argument under the sun, lies in the confusion of language. If Happiness mean Welfare, there is no doubt but all men should and must pursue their Welfare, that is to say, pursue what is worthy of their pursuit. But if, on the other hand, Happiness mean, as for most men it does, 'agreeable sensations,' Enjoyment refined or not, then must we observe that there *is* a doubt; or rather that there is a certainty the other way. Strictly considered, this truth, that man has in him something higher than a Love of Pleasure, take Pleasure in what sense you will, has been the text of all true Teachers and Preachers, since the beginning of the world; and in one or another dialect, we may hope, will continue to be preached and taught till the world end. Neither is our own day without its asserters thereof: what, for example, does the astonished reader make of this little sentence from Schiller's *Æsthetic Letters?* It is on that old question, the 'improvement of the species;' which, however, is handled here in a very new manner:

'The first acquisitions, then, which men gathered in the Kingdom of Spirit were *Anxiety* and *Fear;* both, it is true, products of Reason, not of Sense; but of a Reason that mistook its object, and mistook its mode of application. Fruits of this same tree are all your Happiness-Systems (*Glückseligkeitssysteme*), whether they have for object the passing day, or the whole of life, or what renders them no whit more venerable, the whole of Eternity. A boundless duration of Being and Well-being (*Daseyns und Wohlseyns*) simply for

Being and Well-being's sake, is an Ideal belonging to Appetite alone, and which only the struggle of mere Animalism (*Thierheit*), longing to be infinite, gives rise to. Thus without gaining anything for his Manhood, he, by this first effort of Reason, loses the happy limitation of the Animal; and has now only the unenviable superiority of missing the Present in an effort directed to the Distance, and whereby still, in the whole boundless Distance, nothing but the Present is sought for.'*

The *Æsthetic Letters*, in which this and many far deeper matters come into view, will one day deserve a long chapter to themselves. Meanwhile we cannot but remark, as a curious symptom of this time, that the pursuit of merely sensuous good, of personal Pleasure in one shape or other, should be the universally admitted formula of man's whole duty. Once, Epicurus had his Zeno; and if the herd of mankind have at all times been the slaves of Desire, drudging anxiously for their mess of pottage, or filling themselves with swine's husks,—earnest natures were not wanting who, at least in theory, asserted for their kind a higher vocation than this; declaring, as they could, that man's soul was no dead Balance for 'motives' to sway hither and thither, but a living, divine Soul, indefeasibly Free, whose birthright it was to be the servant of Virtue, Goodness, God, and in such service to be blessed without fee or reward. Nowadays, however, matters are, on all hands, managed far more prudently. The choice of Hercules could not occasion much difficulty, in these times, to any young man of talent. On the one hand,—

* Briefe über die Æsthetische Erziehung des Menschen. B. 24.

by a path which is steep, indeed, yet smoothed by much travelling, and kept in constant repair by many a moral Macadam,—smokes (in patent calefactors) a Dinner of innumerable courses; on the other, by a downward path, through avenues of very mixed character, frowns in the distance a grim Gallows, probably with 'improved drop.' Thus is Utility the only God of these days; and our honest Benthamites are but a small Provincial Synod of that boundless Communion. Without gift of prophecy we may predict, that the straggling bush-fire which is kept up here and there against that body of well-intentioned men, must one day become a universal battle; and the grand question, Mind *versus* Matter, be again under new forms judged of and decided.—But we wander too far from our task; to which, therefore, nothing doubtful of a prosperous issue in due time to that Utilitarian struggle, we hasten to return.

In forming for ourselves some picture of Schiller as a man, of what may be called his moral character, perhaps the very perfection of his manner of existence tends to diminish our estimate of its merits. What he aimed at he has attained in a singular degree. His life, at least from the period of manhood, is still, unruffled; of clear, even course. The completeness of the victory hides from us the magnitude of the struggle. On the whole, however, we may admit, that his character was not so much a great character as a holy one. We have often named him a Priest; and this title, with the quiet loftiness, the pure, secluded, only internal, yet still heavenly worth that should belong to it, perhaps best describes him. One high enthusiasm takes possession of his whole nature. Herein lies his strength, as well as the

task he has to do; for this he lived, and we may say also he died for it. In his life we see not that the social affections played any deep part. As a son, husband, father, friend, he is ever kindly, honest, amiable; but rarely, if at all, do outward things stimulate him into what can be called passion. Of the wild loves and lamentations, and all the fierce ardour that distinguish, for instance, his Scottish contemporary Burns, there is scarcely any trace here. In fact, it was towards the Ideal, not towards the Actual, that Schiller's faith and hope was directed. His highest happiness lay not in outward honour, pleasure, social recreation, perhaps not even in friendly affection, such as the world could shew it; but in the realm of Poetry, a city of the mind, where, for him, all that was true and noble had foundation. His habits, accordingly, though far from dissocial, were solitary; his chief business and chief pleasure lay in silent meditation.

'His intolerance of interruptions,' we are told, at an early period of his life, 'first put him on the plan of studying by night; an alluring, but pernicious practice, which began at Dresden, and was never afterwards given up. His recreations breathed a similar spirit: he loved to be much alone, and strongly moved. The banks of the Elbe were the favourite resort of his mornings: here, wandering in solitude, amid groves and lawns, and green and beautiful places, he abandoned his mind to delicious musings; or meditated on the cares and studies which had lately been employing, and were again soon to employ him. At times he might be seen floating on the river, in a gondola, feasting himself with the loveliness of earth and sky. He delighted most to be there when tempests were abroad; his unquiet spirit found a solace in the expression of its own unrest on

the face of Nature; danger lent a charm to his situation; he felt in harmony with the scene, when the rack was sweeping stormfully across the heavens, and the forests were sounding in the breeze, and the river was rolling its chafed waters into wild eddying heaps.'

'During summer,' it is mentioned at a subsequent date, 'his place of study was in a garden, which he at length purchased, in the suburbs of Jena, not far from the Weselhofts' house, where, at that time, was the office of the *Allgemeine Litteraturzeitung*.. Reckoning from the market-place of Jena, it lies on the south-west border of the town, between the Engelgatter and the Neuthor, in a hollow defile, through which a part of the Leutrabach flows round the city. On the top of the acclivity, from which there is a beautiful prospect into the valley of the Saal, and the fir mountains of the neighbouring forest, Schiller built himself a small house, with a single chamber. It was his favourite abode during hours of composition; a great part of the works he then wrote were written here. In winter he likewise dwelt apart from the tumult of men;—in the Griesbachs' house, on the outside of the city trench. On sitting down to his desk at night, he was wont to keep some strong coffee, or wine-chocolate, but more frequently a flask of old Rhenish, or Champagne, standing by him, that he might from time to time repair the exhaustion of nature. Often the neighbours used to hear him earnestly declaiming in the silence of the night; and whoever had an opportunity of watching him on such occasions,—a thing very easy to be done, from the heights lying opposite his little garden-house, on the other side of the dale,—might see him now speaking aloud, and walking swiftly to and fro in his chamber, then suddenly throwing himself down into his chair, and writing; and drinking the while, sometimes more than once, from the glass standing near him. In winter he was to be found at his desk till four, or even five o'clock, in the morning; in

summer till towards three. He then went to bed, from which he seldom rose till nine or ten.'

And again:

'At Weimar his present way of life was like his former one at Jena: his business was to study and compose; his recreations were in the circle of his family, where he could abandon himself to affections grave or trifling, and in frank cheerful intercourse with a few friends. Of the latter he had lately formed a social club, the meetings of which afforded him a regular and innocent amusement. He still loved solitary walks: in the Park at Weimar he might frequently be seen, wandering among the groves and remote avenues, with a note-book in his hand; now loitering slowly along, now standing still, now moving rapidly on: if any one appeared in sight, he would dart into another alley, that his dream might not be broken. One of his favourite resorts, we are told, was the thickly-overshadowed, rocky path, which leads to the *Römische Haus*, a pleasure-house of the Duke's, built under the direction of Goethe. There he would often sit, in the gloom of the crags overgrown with cypresses and box-wood; shady thickets before him; not far from the murmur of a little brook, which there gushes in a smooth slaty channel, and where some verses of Goethe are cut upon a brown plate of stone, and fixed in the rock.'*

Such retirement, alike from the tumults and the pleasures of busy men, though it seems to diminish the merit of virtuous conduct in Schiller, is itself, as hinted above, the best proof of his virtue. No man is born without ambitious worldly desires; and for no man, especially for no man like Schiller, can the victory over them be too complete. His duty lay in that mode of

* Life of Schiller.

life; and he had both discovered his duty, and addressed himself with his whole might to perform it. Nor was it in estrangement from men's interests that this seclusion originated: but rather in deeper concern for these. From many indications, we can perceive that to Schiller the task of the Poet appeared of far weightier import to mankind, in these times, than that of any other man whatever. It seemed to him that he was 'casting his 'bread upon the waters, and would find it after many 'days;' that when the noise of all conquerors, and demagogues, and political reformers had quite died away, some tone of heavenly wisdom that had dwelt even in him might still linger among men, and be acknowledged as heavenly and priceless, whether as his or not; whereby, though dead, he would yet speak, and his spirit would live throughout all generations, when the syllables that once formed his name had passed into forgetfulness for ever. We are told, 'he was in the 'highest degree philanthropic and humane: and often 'said that he had no deeper wish than to know all men 'happy.' What was still more, he strove, in his public and private capacity, to do his utmost for that end. Honest, merciful, disinterested, he is at all times found: and for the great duty laid on him no man was ever more unweariedly ardent. It was his evening song and his morning prayer. He lived for it; and he died for it; 'sacrificing,' in the words of Goethe, 'his Life itself to 'this delineating of Life.'

In collision with his fellow-men, for with him as with others this also was a part of his relation to society, we find him no less noble than in friendly union with them. He mingles in none of the controversies of

the time; or only like a god in the battles of men. In his conduct towards inferiors, even ill-intentioned and mean inferiors, there is every where a true, dignified, patrician spirit. Ever witnessing, and inwardly lamenting, the baseness of vulgar Literature in his day, he makes no clamorous attacks on it; alludes to it only from afar: as in Milton's writings, so in his, few of his contemporaries are named, or hinted at; it was not with men, but with things that he had a warfare. The *Review of Bürger*, so often descanted on, was doubtless highly afflicting to that down-broken, unhappy poet; but no hostility to Bürger, only love and veneration for the Art he professed, is to be discerned in it. With Bürger, or with any other mortal, he had no quarrel: the favour of the public, which he himself enjoyed in the highest measure, he esteemed at no high value. 'The Artist,' said he in a noble passage, already known to English readers, 'the Artist, it is true, is the son of 'his time; but pity for him if he is its pupil, or even its 'favourite! Let some beneficent divinity snatch him, 'when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and 'nurse him with the milk of a better time; that he may 'ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. 'And having grown to manhood, let him return, a 'foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to de-'light it by his presence, but dreadful like the son of 'Agamemnon, to purify it!' On the whole, Schiller has no trace of vanity; scarcely of pride, even in its best sense, for the modest self-consciousness, which characterizes genius, is with him rather implied than openly expressed. He has no hatred; no anger, save against Falsehood and Baseness, where it may be called

a holy anger. Presumptuous triviality stood bared in his keen glance; but his look is the noble scowl that curls the lip of an Apollo, when, pierced with sun-arrows, the serpent expires before him. In a word, we can say of Schiller, what can be said only of few in any country or time: He was a high ministering servant at Truth's altar; and bore him worthily of the office he held. Let this, and that it was even in our age, be for ever remembered to his praise.

Schiller's intellectual character has, as indeed is always the case, an accurate conformity with his moral one. Here too he is simple in his excellence; lofty rather than expansive or varied; pure, divinely ardent rather than great. A noble sensibility, the truest sympathy with Nature, in all forms, animates him; yet scarcely any creative gift altogether commensurate with this. If to his mind's eye all forms of Nature have a meaning and beauty, it is only under a few forms, chiefly of the severe or pathetic kind, that he can body forth this meaning, can represent as a Poet what as a Thinker he discerns and loves. We might say, his music is true spheral music; yet only with few tones, in simple modulation; no full choral harmony is to be heard in it. That Schiller, at least in his later years, attained a genuine poetic style, and dwelt, more or less, in the perennial regions of his Art, no one will deny: yet still his poetry shews rather like a partial than a universal gift; the laboured product of certain faculties rather than the spontaneous product of his whole nature. At the summit of the pyre, there is indeed white flame; but the materials are not all in flame, perhaps not all ignited. Nay, often it seems to

us, as if poetry were, on the whole, not his essential gift; as if his genius were reflective in a still higher degree than creative; philosophical and oratorical rather than poetic. To the last, there is a stiffness in him, a certain infusibility. His genius is not an Æolian-harp for the common wind to play with, and make wild free melody; but a scientific harmonica, which being artfully touched will yield rich notes, though in limited measure. It may be, indeed, or rather it is highly probable, that of the gifts which lay in him only a small portion was unfolded: for we are to recollect that nothing came to him without a strenuous effort; and that he was called away at middle age. At all events, here as we find him we should say, that of all his endowments the most perfect is understanding. Accurate, thorough insight is a quality we miss in none of his productions, whatever else may be wanting. He has an intellectual vision, clear, wide, piercing, methodical; a truly philosophic eye. Yet in regard to this also it is to be remarked, that the same simplicity, the same want of universality again displays itself. He looks aloft rather than around. It is in high, far-seeing philosophic views that he delights; in speculations on Art, on the dignity and destiny of Man, rather than on the common doings and interests of Men. Nevertheless these latter, mean as they seem, are boundless in significance; for every the poorest aspect of Nature, especially of living Nature, is a type and manifestation of the invisible spirit that works in Nature. There is properly no object trivial or insignificant: but every finite thing, could we look well, is as a window, through which solemn vistas are opened into Infinitude itself.

But neither as a Poet nor as a Thinker, neither in delineation nor in exposition and discussion, does Schiller more than glance at such objects. For the most part, the Common is to him still the Common; or is idealized, rather as it were by mechanical art than by inspiration: not by deeper poetic or philosophic inspection, disclosing new beauty in its everyday features, but rather by deducting these, by casting them aside, and dwelling on what brighter features may remain in it. Herein Schiller, as indeed he himself was modestly aware, differs essentially from most great poets; and from none more than from his great contemporary, Goethe. Such intellectual pre-eminence as this, valuable though it be, is the easiest and the least valuable; a pre-eminence which, indeed, captivates the general eye, but may, after all, have little intrinsic grandeur. Less in rising into lofty abstractions lies the difficulty, than in seeing well and lovingly the complexities of what is at hand. He is wise who can instruct us and assist us in the business of daily virtuous living; he who trains us to see old truth under Academic formularies may be wise or not, as it chances; but we love to see Wisdom in unpretending forms, to recognise her royal features under week-day vesture.—There may be more true spiritual force in a Proverb than in a Philosophical System. A King in the midst of his body-guards, with all his trumpets, war-horses, and gilt standard-bearers, will look great though he be little; but only some Roman Carus can give audience to satrap-ambassadors, while seated on the ground, with a woollen cap, and supping on boiled pease, like a common soldier.

In all Schiller's earlier writings, nay more or less in

the whole of his writings, this aristocratic fastidiousness, this comparatively barren elevation, appears as a leading characteristic. In speculation he is either altogether abstract and systematic, or he dwells on old, conventionally-noble themes; never looking abroad, over the many-coloured stream of life, to elucidate and ennoble it; or only looking on it, so to speak, from a college window. The philosophy even of his Histories, for example, founds itself mainly on the perfectibility of man, the effect of constitutions, of religions, and other such high, purely scientific objects. In his Poetry we have a similar manifestation. The interest turns on prescribed, old-established matters; common love-mania, passionate greatness, enthusiasm for liberty, and the like. This even in *Don Karlos*; a work of what may be called his transition-period, the turning-point between his earlier and his later period, where still we find Posa, the favourite hero, 'towering aloft, far-'shining, clear, and also cold and vacant, as a sea-'beacon.' In after years, Schiller himself saw well that the greatest lay not here. With unwearied effort he strove to lower and to widen his sphere; and not without success, as many of his Poems testify; for example, the *Lied der Glocke* (Song of the Bell), everyway a noble composition; and, in a still higher degree, the tragedy of *Wilhelm Tell*, the last, and, so far as spirit and style are concerned, the best of all his dramas.

Closely connected with this imperfection, both as cause and as consequence, is Schiller's singular want of Humour. Humour is properly the exponent of low things; that which first renders them poetical to the mind. The man of Humour sees common life, even mean life, under the new light of sportfulness and love;

whatever has existence has a charm for him. Humour has justly been regarded as the finest perfection of poetic genius. He who wants it, be his other gifts what they may, has only half a mind; an eye for what is above him, not for what is about him or below him. Now, among all writers of any real poetic genius, we cannot recollect one who, in this respect, exhibits such total deficiency as Schiller. In his whole writings there is scarcely any vestige of it, scarcely any attempt that way. His nature was without Humour; and he had too true a feeling to adopt any counterfeit in its stead. Thus no drollery or caricature, still less any barren mockery, which, in the hundred cases, are all that we find passing current as Humour, discover themselves in Schiller. His works are full of laboured earnestness; he is the gravest of all writers. Some of his critical discussions, especially in the *Æsthetische Briefe*, where he designates the ultimate height of man's culture by the title *Spieltrieb* (literally, Sport-impulse), prove that he knew what Humour was, and how essential; as indeed, to his intellect, all forms of excellence, even the most alien to his own, were painted with a wonderful fidelity. Nevertheless, he himself attains not that height which he saw so clearly; to the last the *Spieltrieb* could be little more than a theory with him. With the single exception of *Wallenstein's Lager*, where, too, the Humour, if it be such, is not deep, his other attempts at mirth, fortunately very few, are of the heaviest. A rigid intensity, a serious enthusiastic ardour, majesty rather than grace, still more than lightness or sportfulness, characterizes him. Wit he had, such wit as keen intellectual insight can give; yet even

of this no large endowment. Perhaps he was too honest, too sincere, for the exercise of wit; too intent on the deeper relations of things to note their more transient collisions. Besides, he dealt in Affirmation, and not in Negation; in which last, it has been said, the material of wit chiefly lies.

These observations are to point out for us the special department and limits of Schiller's excellence; nowise to call in question its reality. Of his noble sense for Truth, both in speculation and in action; of his deep genial insight into Nature; and the living harmony in which he renders back what is highest and grandest in Nature, no reader of his works need be reminded. In whatever belongs to the pathetic, the heroic, the tragically elevating, Schiller is at home; a master; nay perhaps the greatest of all late poets. To the assiduous student, moreover, much else that lay in Schiller, but was never worked into shape, will become partially visible: deep, inexhaustible mines of thought and feeling; a whole world of gifts, the finest produce of which was but beginning to be realized. To his high-minded, unwearied efforts what was impossible, had length of years been granted him! There is a tone in some of his later pieces, which here and there breathes of the very highest region of Art. Nor are the natural or accidental defects we have noticed in his genius, even as it stands, such as to exclude him from the rank of great Poets. Poets whom the whole world reckons great have, more than once, exhibited the like. Milton, for example, shares most of them with him: like Schiller he dwells, with full power, only in the high and earnest; in all other provinces exhibiting a certain

inaptitude, an elephantine unpliancy: he too has little Humour; his coarse invective has in it contemptuous emphasis enough, yet scarcely any graceful sport. Indeed, on the positive side also, these two worthies are not without a resemblance. Under far other circumstances, with less massiveness, and vehement strength of soul, there is in Schiller the same intensity; the same concentration, and towards similar objects, towards whatever is Sublime in Nature and in Art; which sublimities they both, each in his several way, worship with undivided heart. There is not in Schiller's nature the same rich complexity of rhythm, as in Milton's, with its depths of linked sweetness; yet in Schiller too there is something of the same pure swelling force, some tone which, like Milton's, is deep, majestic, solemn.

It was as a Dramatic Author that Schiller distinguished himself to the world: yet often we feel as if chance rather than a natural tendency had led him into this province; as if his talent were essentially, in a certain style, lyrical, perhaps even epic, rather than dramatic. He dwelt within himself, and could not without effort, and then only within a certain range, body forth other forms of being. Nay much of what is called his poetry seems to us, as hinted above, oratorical rather than poetical; his first bias might have led him to be a speaker, rather than a singer. Nevertheless, a pure fire dwelt deep in his soul; and only in Poetry, of one or the other sort, could this find utterance. The rest of his nature, at the same time, has a certain prosaic rigour; so that not without strenuous and complex endeavours, long persisted in, could its poetic quality evolve itself. Quite pure, and as the all-sovereign

element, it perhaps never did evolve itself; and among such complex endeavours, a small accident might influence large portions of its course.

Of Schiller's honest, undivided zeal in this great problem of self-cultivation, we have often spoken. What progress he had made, and in spite of what difficulties, appears if we contrast his earlier compositions with those of his later years. A few specimens of both sorts we shall here present. By this means, too, such of our readers as are unacquainted with Schiller, may gain some clearer notion of his poetic individuality than any description of ours could give. We shall take the *Robbers*, as his first performance, what he himself calls 'a monster produced by the unnatural union of Genius with Thraldom;' the fierce fuliginous fire that burns in that singular piece will still be discernible in separated passages. The following Scene, even in the yeasty vehicle of our common English version, has not wanted its admirers; it is the Second of the Third Act:

'*Country on the Danube.*

THE ROBBERS.

(*Camped on a Height, under Trees: the Horses are grazing on the Hill farther down.*)

MOOR. I can no farther (*throws himself on the ground*). My limbs ache as if ground in pieces. My tongue parched as a potsherd. (*Schweitzer glides away unperceived.*) I would ask you to fetch me a handful of water from the stream; but ye all are wearied to death.

SCHWARZ. And the wine too is all down there, in our jacks.

MOOR. See, how lovely the harvest looks!—The trees almost breaking under their load. The vine full of hope.

GRIMM. It is a plentiful year.

MOOR. Think'st thou?—And so *one* toil in the world will be repaid. *One?*—Yet over night there may come a hailstorm, and shatter it all to ruin.

SCHWARZ. Possible enough. It might all be ruined two hours before reaping.

MOOR. Ay, so say I. It will all be ruined. Why should man prosper in what he has from the Ant; when he fails in what makes him like the Gods?—Or is this the true aim of his Destiny?

SCHWARZ. I know it not.

MOOR. Thou hast said well; and done still better, if thou never tri'dst to know it!—Brother,—I have looked at men, at their insect-anxieties, and giant-projects — their godlike schemes and mouselike occupations, their wondrous race-running after Happiness;—he trusting to the gallop of his horse,—he to the nose of his ass,—a third to his own legs; this whirling lottery of life, in which so many a creature stakes his innocence, and—his Heaven! all trying for a prize, and—blanks are the whole drawing,—there was not a prize in the batch. It is a drama, Brother, to bring tears into thy eyes, if it tickle thy midriff to laughter.

SCHWARZ. How gloriously the sun is setting yonder!

MOOR (*lost in the view*). So dies a Hero!—To be worshipped!

GRIMM. It seems to move thee.

MOOR. When I was a lad—it was my darling thought to live so, to die so—(*with suppressed pain*). It was a lad's thought!

GRIMM. I hope so, truly.

MOOR (*draws his hat down on his face*). There was a time—Leave me alone, comrades.

SCHWARZ. Moor! Moor! What, Devil?—How his colour goes!

GRIMM. Ha! What ails him? Is he ill?

Moor. There was a time when I could not sleep, if my evening prayer had been forgotten—

Grimm. Art thou going crazed? Will Moor let such milksop fancies tutor him?

Moor (*lays his head on Grimm's breast*). Brother! Brother!

Grimm. Come! don't be a child,—I beg—

Moor. Were I a child!—O, were I one!

Grimm. Pooh! Pooh!

Schwarz. Cheer up. Look at the brave landscape,—the fine evening.

Moor. Yes, Friends, this world is all so lovely.

Schwarz. There now—that's right.

Moor. This Earth so glorious.

Grimm. Right,—Right—that is it.

Moor (*sinking back*). And I so hideous in this lovely world, and I a monster in this glorious Earth.

Grimm. Out on it!

Moor. My innocence! My innocence!—See, all things are gone forth to bask in the peaceful beam of the Spring,—why must I alone inhale the torments of Hell out of the joys of Heaven?—That all should be so happy, all so married together by the spirit of peace!—The whole world *one* family, its Father above—that Father not *mine*!—I alone the castaway,—I alone struck out from the company of the just;—for me no child to lisp my name,—never for me the languishing look of one whom I love,—never, never, the embracing of a bosom friend (*dashing wildly back*). Encircled with murderers,—serpents hissing round me,—rushing down to the gulph of perdition on the eddying torrent of wickedness,—amid the flowers of the glad world, a howling Abaddon!

Schwarz (*to the rest*). How *is* this? I never saw him so.

Moor (*with piercing sorrow*). O, that I might return into

my mother's womb,—that I might be born a beggar!—No! I durst not pray, O Heaven, to be as one of these day-labourers—Oh! I would toil till the blood ran down my temples to buy myself the pleasure of one noontide sleep,—the blessedness of a single tear.

GRIMM (*to the rest*). Patience, a moment. The fit is passing.

MOOR. There *was* a time too when I could weep—O ye days of peace, thou castle of my father, ye green lovely valleys! O all ye Elysian scenes of my childhood! will ye never come again, never with your balmy sighing cool my burning bosom? Mourn with me, Nature! They will never come again, never cool my burning bosom with their balmy sighing. They are gone! gone! and will not return!'

Or take that still wilder monologue of Moor's on the old subject of suicide; in the midnight Forest, among the sleeping Robbers:

'(*He lays aside the lute, and walks up and down in deep thought.*)

Who shall warrant me?——'Tis all so dark,— perplexed labyrinths,—no outlet, no loadstar—Were it but *over* with this last draught of breath—*Over*, like a sorry farce.—But whence this fierce *Hunger* after *Happiness?* whence this ideal of a *never-reached* perfection? this *continuation* of uncompleted plans?—if the pitiful pressure of this pitiful thing (*holding out a Pistol*) makes the wise man equal with the fool, the coward with the brave, the noble-minded with the caitiff?—There is so divine a harmony in all irrational Nature, why should there be this dissonance in rational?—No! No! there is somewhat beyond, for I have yet never known happiness.

'Think ye, I will tremble? spirits of my murdered ones!

I will not tremble (*trembling violently*).—Your feeble dying moan,—your black-choaked faces,—your frightfully gaping wounds are but links of an unbreakable chain of Destiny; and depend at last on my childish sports, on the whims of my nurses and pedagogues, on the temperament of my father, on the blood of my mother—(*shaken with horror*). Why has my Perillus made of me a Brazen Bull to roast mankind in my glowing belly?

'(*Gazing on the Pistol*) TIME and ETERNITY—linked together by a single moment!—Dread key, that shuttest behind me the prison of Life, and before me openest the dwelling of eternal Night—say—O say,—*whither*,—*whither* wilt thou lead me? Foreign, never circumnavigated Land!—See, manhood waxes faint under *this* image; the effort of the finite gives up, and Fancy, the capricious ape of Sense, juggles our credulity with strange shadows.—No! No! It becomes not a man to waver. Be what thou wilt, *nameless Yonder*—so this Me keep but true. Be what thou wilt, so I take *myself* along with me—!—Outward things are but the colouring of the man—I am my Heaven and my Hell.

'What if Thou shouldst send me *companionless* to some burnt and blasted circle of the Universe; which Thou hast banished from thy sight; where the lone darkness and the motionless desert were my prospects—for ever?—I would people the silent wilderness with my fantasies; I should have Eternity for leisure to unravel the perplexed image of the boundless wo.—Or wilt Thou lead me through still other births! still other scenes of pain, from stage to stage—onwards to Annihilation? The life-threads that are to be woven for me Yonder, cannot I tear them asunder, as I do these?—Thou canst make me Nothing;—but *this* freedom canst Thou not take from me. (*He loads the Pistol. Suddenly he stops.*) And shall I for terror of a miserable life—die?—Shall I give wretchedness the victory over me?—No, I will

endure it (*he throws the Pistol away*). Let misery blunt itself on my pride! I will go through with it.'*

And now with these ferocities, and Sibylline frenzies, compare the placid strength of the following delineation, also of a stern character, from the *Maid of Orleans*; where Talbot, the grey veteran, dark, unbelieving, indomitable, passes down, as he thinks, to the land of utter Nothingness, contemptuous even of the Fate that destroys him, and—

> 'In death reposes on the soil of France,
> Like hero on his unsurrender'd shield.'

It is the sixth Scene of the third Act; in the heat of a Battle:

(*The scene changes to an open Space encircled with Trees. During the music, Soldiers are seen hastily retreating across the Back ground.*)

TALBOT, *leaning on* FASTOLF, *and accompanied by Soldiers. Soon after,* LIONEL.

TALBOT.

Here, set me down beneath this tree, and you
Betake yourselves again to battle: quick!
I need no help to die.

FASTOLF.

O day of wo! (*Lionel enters.*)
Look what a sight awaits you, Lionel!
Our leader wounded, dying!

LIONEL.

God forbid!
O noble Talbot, this is not a time to die.

* Act IV. Scene VI.

Yield not to Death; force faltering Nature
By your strength of soul, that life depart not!

TALBOT.

In vain! the day of Destiny is come
That levels with the dust our power in France.
In vain, in the fierce clash of desp'rate battle,
Have I risk'd my utmost to withstand it:
The bolt has smote and crush'd me, and I lie
To rise no more for ever. Rheims is lost;
Make haste to rescue Paris.

LIONEL.

Paris is the Dauphin's:
A post arrived even now with th' evil news
It had surrender'd.

TALBOT (*tears away his bandages*).

Then flow out, ye life-streams;
This Sun is growing loathsome to me.

LIONEL.

Fastolf,
Convey him to the rear: this post can hold
Few instants more; yon coward knaves fall back,
Resistless comes the Witch, and havoc round her.

TALBOT.

Madness, thou conquerest, and I must yield:
Against Stupidity the Gods themselves are powerless.
High Reason, radiant Daughter of the head of God,
Wise Foundress of the system of the Universe,
Conductress of the Stars, who art thou, then,
If tied to th' tail o' th' wild horse, Superstition,
Thou must plunge, eyes open, vainly shrieking,
Sheer down with that drunk Beast to the Abyss?
Cursed who sets his life upon the great
And dignified; and with forecasting spirit
Lays out wise plans! The Fool-King's is this World.

LIONEL.

Oh! Death is near! Think of your God, and pray!

TALBOT.

Were we, as brave men, worsted by the brave,
'T had been but Fortune's common fickleness:
But that a paltry Farce should tread us down!—
Did toil and peril, all our earnest life,
Deserve no graver issue?

LIONEL (*grasps his hand*).

Talbot, farewell!
The meed of bitter tears I'll duly pay you,
When the fight is done, should I outlive it.
But now Fate calls me to the field, where yet
She wav'ring sits, and shakes her doubtful urn.
Farewell! we meet beyond the unseen shore.
Brief parting for long friendship! God be with you! [*Exit.*

TALBOT.

Soon it is over, and to th' Earth I render,
To th' everlasting Sun, the transient atoms
Which for pain and pleasure join'd to form me;
And of the mighty Talbot, whose renown
Once fill'd the world, remains nought but a handful
Of flitting dust. Thus man comes to his end;
And all our conquest in the fight of Life
Is knowledge that 'tis Nothing, and contempt
For hollow shows which once we chas'd and worship'd.

SCENE VII.

Enter CHARLES, BURGUNDY, DUNOIS, DU CHATEL, *and Soldiers.*

BURGUNDY.

The trench is stormed.

DUNOIS.

Bravo! The fight is ours.

CHARLES (*observing* TALBOT).

Ha! who is this that to the light of day
Is bidding his constrained and sad farewell?
His bearing speaks no common man; go, haste,
Assist him, if assistance yet avail.

(*Soldiers from the Dauphin's suite step forward.*)

FASTOLF.

Back! Keep away! Approach not the Departing,
Him whom in life ye never wished too near.

BURGUNDY.

What do I see? Great Talbot in his blood!

(*He goes towards him.* TALBOT *gazes fixedly at him, and dies.*)

FASTOLF.

Off, Burgundy! With th' aspect of a Traitor
Disturb not the last moment of a Hero.

The 'Power-words and Thunder-words,' as the Germans call them, so frequent in the *Robbers*,* are altogether wanting here; that volcanic fury has assuaged itself; instead of smoke and red lava, we have sunshine and a verdant world. For still more striking examples of this benignant change, we might refer to many scenes (too long for our present purposes) in *Wallenstein*, and indeed in all the Dramas which followed this, and most of all in *Wilhelm Tell*, which is the latest of them. The careful, and in general truly poetic structure of these works, considered as complete Poems, would exhibit it

* Thus, to take one often-cited instance, Moor's simple question, 'Whether there is any powder left?' receives this emphatic answer, 'Powder enough to blow the Earth into the Moon!'

infinitely better; but for this object, larger limits than ours at present, and studious Readers as well as a Reviewer, were essential.

In his smaller Poems the like progress is visible. Schiller's works should all be dated, as we study them; but indeed the most, by internal evidence, date themselves.—Besides the *Lied der Glocke*, already mentioned, there are many lyrical pieces of high merit; particularly a whole series of *Ballads*, nearly every one of which is true and poetical. The *Ritter Toggenburg*, the *Dragon-fight*, the *Diver*, are all well known; the *Cranes of Ibycus* has in it, under this simple form, something Old-Grecian, an emphasis, a prophetic gloom which might seem borrowed even from the spirit of Æschylus. But on these, or any farther on the other poetical works of Schiller, we must not dilate at present. One little piece, which lies by us translated, we may give, as a specimen of his style, in this lyrical province, and therewith terminate this part of our subject. It is entitled *Alpenlied* (Song of the Alps), and seems to require no commentary. Perhaps something of the clear, melodious, yet still somewhat metallic, tone of the original may penetrate even through our version:

Song of the Alps.

By the edge of the chasm is a slippery Track,
The torrent beneath, and the mist hanging o'er thee;
The cliffs of the mountain, huge, rugged, and black,
Are frowning like giants before thee:
And, wouldst thou not waken the sleeping Lawine,
Walk silent and soft through the deadly ravine.

That Bridge with its dizzying, perilous span
Aloft o'er the gulph and its flood suspended,
Think'st thou it was built by the art of man,
By his hand that grim old arch was bended?
Far down in the jaws of the gloomy abyss
The water is boiling and hissing,—for ever will hiss.

That Gate through the rocks is as darksome and drear,
As if to the region of Shadows it carried:
Yet enter! A sweet laughing landscape is here,
Where the Spring with the Autumn is married.
From the world with its sorrows and warfare and wail,
O could I but hide in this bright little vale!

Four Rivers rush down from on high,
Their spring will be hidden for ever;
Their course is to all the four points of the sky,
To each point of the sky is a river;
And fast as they start from their old Mother's feet,
They dash forth, and no more will they meet.

Two Pinnacles rise to the depths of the Blue:
Aloft on their white summits glancing,
Bedeck'd in their garments of golden dew,
The Clouds of the sky are dancing;
There threading alone their lightsome maze,
Uplifted apart from all mortals' gaze.

And high on her ever-enduring throne
The Queen of the mountains reposes;
Her head serene, and azure, and lone,
A diamond crown encloses;
The Sun with his darts shoots round it keen and hot,
He gilds it always, he warms it not.

Of Schiller's Philosophic talent, still more of the results he had arrived at in philosophy, there were much to be said and thought; which we must not enter upon here. As hinted above, his primary endowment seems to us fully as much philosophical as poetical: his intellect, at all events, is peculiarly of that character; strong, penetrating, yet systematic and scholastic, rather than intuitive; and manifesting this tendency both in the objects it treats, and in its mode of treating them. The Transcendental Philosophy, which arose in Schiller's busiest era, could not remain without influence on him: he had carefully studied Kant's System, and appears to have not only admitted but zealously appropriated its fundamental doctrines; remoulding them, however, into his own peculiar forms, so that they seem no longer borrowed, but permanently acquired, not less Schiller's than Kant's. Some, perhaps little aware of his natural wants and tendencies, are of opinion that these speculations did not profit him: Schiller himself, on the other hand, appears to have been well contented with his Philosophy; in which, as harmonized with his Poetry, the assurance, and safe anchorage, for his moral nature might lie.

'From the opponents of the New Philosophy,' says he, 'I expect not that tolerance, which is shewn to every other system, no better seen into than this: for Kant's Philosophy itself, in its leading points, practises no tolerance; and bears much too rigorous a character, to leave any room for accommodation. But in my eyes this does it honour; proving how little it can endure to have truth tampered with. Such a Philosophy will not be discussed with a mere shake of the head. In the open, clear, accessible field of Inquiry it builds

up its system; seeks no shade, makes no reservation: but even as it treats its neighbours, so it requires to be treated; and may be forgiven for lightly esteeming every thing but Proofs. Nor am I terrified to think that the law of Change, from which no human and no divine work finds grace, will operate on this Philosophy, as on every other, and one day its Form will be destroyed: but its Foundations will not have this destiny to fear; for ever since mankind has existed, and any Reason among mankind, these same first principles have been admitted, and on the whole acted upon.'*

Schiller's philosophical performances relate chiefly to matters of Art; not, indeed, without significant glances into still more important regions of speculation: nay, Art, as he viewed it, has its basis on the most important interests of man, and of itself involves the harmonious adjustment of these. We have already undertaken to present our readers, on a future occasion, with some abstract of the *Æsthetic Letters*, one of the deepest, most compact pieces of reasoning we are any where acquainted with: by that opportunity, the general character of Schiller, as a Philosopher, will best fall to be discussed. Meanwhile, the two following brief passages, as some indication of his views on the highest of all philosophical questions, may stand here without commentary. He is speaking of *Wilhelm Meister*, and in the first extract, of the *Fair Saint's Confessions*, which occupy the Fifth Book of that work:

'The transition from Religion in general to the Christian Religion, by the experience of sin, is excellently conceived. * * * I find virtually in the Christian System the

* Correspondence with Goethe, I. 58.

rudiments of the Highest and Noblest; and the different phases of this System, in practical life, are so offensive and mean, precisely because they are bungled representations of that same Highest. If you study the specific character of Christianity, what distinguishes it from all monotheistic Religions, it lies in nothing else than in that *making-dead of the Law*, the removal of that Kantean Imperative, instead of which Christianity requires a free Inclination. It is thus, in its pure form, a representing of Moral Beauty, or the Incarnation of the Holy; and in this sense, the only *æsthetic* Religions: hence, too, I explain to myself why it so prospers with female natures, and only in women is now to be met with under a tolerable figure.'*

'But in seriousness,' he says elsewhere, 'whence may it proceed that you have had a man educated, and in all points equipt, without ever coming upon certain wants which only Philosophy can meet? I am convinced, it is entirely attributable to the *æsthetic direction* you have taken, through the whole Romance. Within the æsthetic temper there arises no want of those grounds of comfort, which are to be drawn from speculation: such a temper has self-subsistence, has infinitude, within itself; only when the Sensual and the Moral in man strive hostilely together, need help be sought of pure Reason. A healthy poetic nature wants, as you yourself say, no Moral Law, no Rights of Man, no Political Metaphysics. You might have added as well, it wants no Deity, no Immortality, to stay and uphold itself withal. Those three points round which, in the long-run, all speculation turns, may in truth afford such a nature matter for poetic play, but can never become serious concerns and necessities for it.'†

This last seems a singular opinion; and may prove, if it be correct, that Schiller himself was no 'healthy

* Correspondence, I. 195. † II. 131.

poetic nature;' for undoubtedly with him those three points were 'serious concerns and necessities;' as many portions of his works, and various entire treatises, will testify. Nevertheless, it plays an important part in his theories of Poetry; and often, under milder forms, returns on us there.

But, without entering farther on those complex topics, we must here for the present take leave of Schiller. Of his merits we have all along spoken rather on the negative side; and we rejoice in feeling authorized to do so. That any German writer, especially one so dear to us, should already stand so high with British readers that, in admiring him, the critic may also, without prejudice to right feeling on the subject, coolly judge of him, cannot be other than a gratifying circumstance. Perhaps there is no other true Poet of that nation with whom the like course would be suitable.

Connected with this there is one farther observation we must make before concluding. Among younger students of German Literature, the question often arises, and is warmly mooted: Whether Schiller or Goethe is the greater Poet? Of this question we must be allowed to say that it seems rather a slender one, and for two reasons. First, because Schiller and Goethe are of totally dissimilar endowments and endeavours, in regard to all matters intellectual, and cannot well be compared together as Poets. Secondly, because if the question mean to ask, which Poet is on the whole the rarer and more excellent, as probably it does, it must be considered as long ago abundantly answered. To

the clear-sighted and modest Schiller, above all, such a question would have appeared surprising. No one knew better than himself, that as Goethe was a born Poet, so he was in great part a made Poet; that as the one spirit was intuitive, all-embracing, instinct with melody, so the other was scholastic, divisive, only partially and as it were artificially melodious. Besides, Goethe has lived to perfect his natural gift, which the less happy Schiller was not permitted to do. The former accordingly is the national Poet; the latter is not, and never could have been. We once heard a German remark that readers till their twenty-fifth year usually preferred Schiller; after their twenty-fifth year, Goethe. This probably was no unfair illustration of the question. Schiller can seem higher than Goethe only because he is narrower. Thus to unpractised eyes, a Peak of Teneriffe, nay a Strasburg Minster, when we stand on it, may seem higher than a Chimborazo; because the former rise abruptly, without abutment or environment; the latter rises gradually, carrying half a world aloft with it; and only the deeper azure of the heavens, the widened horizon, the 'eternal sunshine,' disclose to the geographer that the 'Region of Change' lies far below him.

However, let us not divide these two Friends, who in life were so benignantly united. Without asserting for Schiller any claim that even enemies can dispute, enough will remain for him. We may say that, as a Poet and Thinker, he attained to a perennial Truth, and ranks among the noblest productions of his century and nation. Goethe may continue *the* German Poet, but neither through long generations can Schiller be

forgotten. 'His works, too, the memory of what he 'did and was, will arise afar off like a towering land-'mark in the solitude of the Past, when distance shall 'have dwarfed into invisibility many lesser people that 'once encompassed him, and hid him from the near 'beholder.'

THE NIBELUNGEN LIED.*

[1831.]

In the year 1757, the Swiss Professor Bodmer printed an ancient poetical manuscript, under the title of *Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage* (Chriemhilde's Revenge, and the Lament); which may be considered as the first of a series, or stream of publications and speculations still rolling on, with increased current, to the present day. Not, indeed, that all these had their source or determining cause in so insignificant a circumstance; their source, or rather thousand sources, lay far elsewhere. As has often been remarked, a certain antiquarian tendency in literature, a fonder, more earnest looking back into the Past, began about that time to manifest itself in all nations (witness our own *Percy's Reliques*): this was among the first distinct symptoms of it in Germany; where, as with ourselves, its manifold effects are still visible enough.

Some fifteen years after Bodmer's publication, which, for the rest, is not celebrated as an editorial feat, one C. H. Müller undertook a *Collection of German Poems from the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Centuries*; wherein, among other articles, he reprinted Bodmer's

* Westminster Review, No. 29.—*Das Nibelungen Lied, übersetzt von Karl Simrock.* (The *Nibelungen Lied*, translated by Karl Simrock.) 2 vols. 12mo. Berlin, 1827.

Chriemhilde and *Klage*, with a highly remarkable addition prefixed to the former, essential indeed to the right understanding of it; and the whole now stood before the world as one Poem, under the name of the *Nibelungen Lied*, or Lay of the Nibelungen. It has since been ascertained that the *Klage* is a foreign inferior appendage; at best, related only as epilogue to the main work: meanwhile out of this *Nibelungen*, such as it was, there soon proceeded new inquiries, and kindred enterprises. For much as the Poem, in the shape it here bore, was defaced and marred, it failed not to attract observation: to all open-minded lovers of poetry, especially where a strong patriotic feeling existed, this singular antique *Nibelungen* was an interesting appearance. Johannes Müller, in his famous *Swiss History*, spoke of it in warm terms: subsequently, August Wilhelm Schlegel, through the medium of the *Deutsche Museum*, succeeded in awakening something like a universal popular feeling on the subject; and, as a natural consequence, a whole host of Editors and Critics, of deep and of shallow endeavour, whose labours we yet see in progress. The *Nibelungen* has now been investigated, translated, collated, commented upon, with more or less result, to almost boundless lengths: besides the Work named at the head of this Paper, and which stands there simply as one of the latest, we have Versions into the modern tongue by Von der Hagen, by Hinsberg, Lachmann, Büsching, Zeune, the last in Prose, and said to be worthless; Criticisms, Introductions, Keys, and so forth, by innumerable others, of whom we mention only Docen and the Brothers Grimm.

By which means, not only has the Poem itself been

elucidated with all manner of researches, but its whole environment has come forth in new light: the scene and personages it relates to, the other fictions and traditions connected with it, have attained a new importance and coherence. Manuscripts, that for ages had lain dormant, have issued from their archives into public view; books that had circulated only in mean guise for the amusement of the people, have become important, not to one or two virtuosos, but to the general body of the learned: and now a whole System of antique Teutonic Fiction and Mythology unfolds itself, shedding here and there a real though feeble and uncertain glimmer over what was once the total darkness of the old Time. No fewer than Fourteen ancient Traditionary Poems, all strangely intertwisted, and growing out of and into one another, have come to light among the Germans; who now, in looking back, find that they too, as well as the Greeks, have their Heroic Age, and round the old Valhalla, as their Northern Pantheon, a world of demi-gods and wonders.

Such a phenomenon, unexpected till of late, cannot but interest a deep-thinking, enthusiastic people. For the *Nibelungen* especially, which lies as the centre and distinct key-stone of the whole too chaotic System,—let us say rather, blooms as a firm sunny island in the middle of these cloud-covered, ever-shifting, sand-whirlpools,—they cannot sufficiently testify their love and veneration. Learned professors lecture on the *Nibelungen*, in public schools, with a praiseworthy view to initiate the German youth in love of their fatherland; from many zealous and nowise ignorant critics we hear

talk of a 'great Northern Epos,' of a 'German Iliad;' the more saturnine are shamed into silence, or hollow mouth-homage; thus from all quarters comes a sound of joyful acclamation; the *Nibelungen* is welcomed as a precious national possession, recovered after six centuries of neglect, and takes undisputed place among the sacred books of German literature.

Of these curious transactions, some rumour has not failed to reach us in England, where our minds, from their own antiquarian disposition, were willing enough to receive it. Abstracts and extracts of the *Nibelungen* have been printed in our language; there have been disquisitions on it in our Reviews: hitherto, however, such as nowise to exhaust the subject. On the contrary, where so much was to be told at once, the speaker might be somewhat puzzled where to begin: it was a much readier method to begin with the end, or with any part of the middle, than like Hamilton's Ram (whose example is too little followed in literary narrative) to begin with the beginning. Thus has our stock of intelligence come rushing out on us quite promiscuously and pellmell; whereby the whole matter could not but acquire a tortuous, confused, altogether inexplicable, and even dreary aspect; and the class of 'well-informed persons' now find themselves in that uncomfortable position, where they are obliged to profess admiration, and at the same time feel that, except by name, they know not what the thing admired is. Such a position towards the venerable *Nibelungen*, which is no less bright and graceful than historically significant, cannot be the right one. Moreover, as appears to us, it might be somewhat mended by very simple

means. Let any one that had honestly read the *Nibelungen*, which in these days is no surprising achievement, only tell us what he found there, and nothing that he did not find: we should then know something, and, what were still better, be ready for knowing more. To search out the secret roots of such a production, ramified through successive layers of centuries, and drawing nourishment from each, may be work, and too hard work, for the deepest philosopher and critic; but to look with natural eyes on what part of it stands visibly above ground, and record his own experiences thereof, is what any reasonable mortal, if he will take heed, can do.

Some such slight service we here intend proffering to our readers: let them glance with us a little into that mighty maze of Northern Archæology; where, it may be, some pleasant prospects will open. If the *Nibelungen* is what we have called it, a firm sunny island amid the weltering chaos of antique tradition, it must be worth visiting on general grounds; nay, if the primeval rudiments of it have the antiquity assigned them, it belongs specially to us English *Teutones* as well as to the German.

Far be it from us, meanwhile, to venture rashly, or farther than is needful, into that same traditionary chaos, fondly named the 'Cycle of Northern Fiction,' with its Fourteen Sectors (or separate Poems), which are rather Fourteen shoreless Limbos, where we hear of pieces containing 'a hundred thousand verses,' and 'seventy thousand verses,' as of a quite natural affair! How travel through that inane country; by what art discover the little grain of Substance that casts such

multiplied immeasurable Shadows? The primeval Mythus, were it at first philosophical truth, or were it historical incident, floats too vaguely on the breath of men: each successive Singer and Redactor furnishes it with new personages, new scenery, to please a new audience; each has the privilege of inventing, and the far wider privilege of borrowing and new-modelling from *all* that have preceded him. Thus though Tradition may have but one root, it grows like a Banian, into a whole overarching labyrinth of trees. Or rather might we say, it is a Hall of Mirrors, where, in pale light each mirror reflects, convexly or concavely, not only some real Object, but the Shadows of this in other mirrors; which again do the like for it: till in such reflection and re-reflection the whole immensity is filled with dimmer and dimmer shapes; and no firm scene lies round us, but a dislocated, distorted chaos, fading away on all hands, in the distance, into utter night. Only to some brave Von der Hagen, furnished with indefatigable ardour, and a deep, almost religious love, is it given to find sure footing there, and see his way. All those *Dukes of Aquitania*, therefore, and *Etzel's Court-holdings*, and *Dietrichs* and *Sigenots* we shall leave standing where they are. Such as desire farther information, will find an intelligible account of the whole Series or Cycle, in Messrs. Weber and Jamieson's *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*; and all possible furtherance, in the numerous German works above alluded to; among which Von der Hagen's writings, though not the readiest, are probably the safest guides. But for us, our business here is with the *Nibelungen*, the inhabited poetic country round which all these wildernesses lie; only as environments of which,

as routes to which, are they of moment to us. Perhaps our shortest and smoothest route will be through the *Heldenbuch* (Hero-book); which is greatly the most important of these subsidiary Fictions, not without interest of its own, and closely related to the *Nibelungen*. This *Heldenbuch*, therefore, we must now address ourselves to traverse with all despatch. At the present stage of the business, too, we shall forbear any historical inquiry and argument concerning the date and local habitation of those Traditions; reserving what little is to be said on that matter till the Traditions themselves have become better known to us. Let the reader, on trust for the present, transport himself into the twelfth or thirteenth century; and therefrom looking back into the sixth or fifth, see what presents itself.

Of the *Heldenbuch*, tried on its own merits, and except as illustrating that other far worthier Poem, or at most as an old national, and still in some measure popular book, we should have felt strongly inclined to say, as the curate in *Don Quixote* so often did, *Al corral con ello*, Out of window with it! Doubtless there are touches of beauty in the work, and even a sort of heartiness and antique quaintness in its wildest follies; but on the whole that George-and-Dragon species of composition has long ceased to find favour with any one; and except for its groundwork, more or less discernible, of old Northern Fiction, this *Heldenbuch* has little to distinguish it from these. Nevertheless, what is worth remark, it seems to have been a far higher favourite than *Nibelungen*, with ancient readers: it was printed soon after the invention of printing; some think in 1472,

for there is no place or date on the first edition; at all events, in 1491, in 1509, and repeatedly since; whereas the *Nibelungen*, though written earlier, and in worth immeasurably superior, had to remain in manuscript three centuries longer. From which, for the thousandth time, inferences might be drawn as to the infallibility of popular taste, and its value as a criterion for poetry. However, it is probably in virtue of this neglect, that the *Nibelungen* boasts of its actual purity; that it now comes before us, clear and graceful as it issued from the old Singer's head and heart; not overloaded with Ass-eared Giants, Fiery Dragons, Dwarfs, and Hairy Women, as the *Heldenbuch* is, many of which, as charity would hope, may be the produce of a later age than that famed *Swabian Era*, to which these poems, as we now see them, are commonly referred. Indeed, one Casper von Roen is understood to have passed the whole *Heldenbuch* through his limbec, in the fifteenth century; but like other rectifiers, instead of purifying it, to have only drugged it with still fiercer ingredients to suit the sick appetite of the time.

Of this drugged and adulterated *Hero-Book* (the only one we yet have, though there is talk of a better) we shall quote the long Title-page of Lessing's Copy, the edition of 1560; from which, with a few intercalated observations, the reader's curiosity may probably obtain what little satisfaction it wants.

Das Heldenbuch Welchs auffs new corrigirt und gebessert ist, mit shönen Figuren geziert. Gedrückt zu Frankfurt am Mayn, durch Weygand Han und Sygmund Feyerabend, &c. That is to say:

'The *Hero-Book*, which is of new corrected and

'improved, adorned with beautiful Figures. Printed at 'Frankfurt on the Mayn, through Weygand Han; and 'Sygmund Feyerabend.

'*Part First* saith of Kaiser Ottnit and the little King 'Elberich, how they with great peril, over sea, in Hea- 'thendom, won from a king his daughter (and how he 'in lawful marriage took her to wife).'

From which announcement the reader already guesses the contents: how this little King Elberich was a Dwarf, or Elf, some half-span long, yet full of cunning practices, and the most helpful activity; nay, stranger still, had been Kaiser Ottnit of *Lampartei* or Lombardy's father,—having had his own ulterior views in that indiscretion. How they sailed with Messina ships, into Paynim land; fought with that unspeakable Türk, King Machabol, in and about his fortress and metropolis of Montebur, which was all stuck round with christian heads; slew from seventy to a hundred thousand of the Infidels at one heat; saw the lady on the battlements; and at length, chiefly by Dwarf Elberich's help, carried her off in triumph; wedded her in Messina; and without difficulty, rooting out the Mahometan prejudice, converted her to the creed of Mother Church. The fair runaway seems to have been of a gentle, tractable disposition, very different from old Machabol; concerning whom it is here chiefly to be noted that Dwarf Elberich, rendering himself invisible on their first interview, plucks out a handful of hair from his chin; thereby increasing to a tenfold pitch the royal choler; and, what is still more remarkable, furnishing the poet Wieland, six centuries afterwards, with the critical incident in his *Oberon*. As for the young lady herself, we cannot but

admit that she was well worth sailing to Heathendom for; and shall here, as our sole specimen of that old German doggerel, give the description of her, as she first appeared on the battlements during the fight; subjoining a version as verbal and literal as the plainest prose can make it. Considered as a detached passage, it is perhaps the finest we have met with in the *Heldenbuch.*

Ihr herz brann also schone,
Recht als ein rot rubein,
Gleich dem vollen mone
Gaben ihr äuglein schein.
Sich hett die maget reine
Mit rosen wohl bekleid
Und auch mit Berlin Kleine,
Niemand dä tröst die meid.

Her heart burnt (with anxiety) as beautiful
Just as a red ruby,
Like the full moon
Her eyes (eyelings, pretty eyes) gave sheen.
Herself had the maiden pure
Well adorned with roses,
And also with pearls small:
No one there comforted the maid.

Sie war schön an dem leibe
Und zu den Seiten schmal
Recht als ein Kertze Scheibe
Wohlgeschaffen überall:
Ihr beyden händ gemeine
Dars ihr gentz nichts gebrach;
Ihr näglein schön und reine,
Das man sich darin besach.

She was fair of body,
And in the waist slender;
Right as a (golden) candlestick
Well-fashioned everywhere:
Her two hands proper,
So that she wanted nought;
Her little nails fair and pure,
That you could see yourself therein.

Ihr har war schön umbfangen
Mit elder seiden fein;
Das liess sie nieder hangen,
Das hübsche Magedlein.
Sie trug ein kron mit steinen
Sie war von gold so rot;
Elberich dem viel kleinen
War zu der Magte not.

Her hair was beautifully girt
With noble silk (band) fine;
She let it flow down,
The lovely maidling.
She wore a crown with jewels,
It was of gold so red:
For Elberich the very small
The maid had need (to console her).

Da vornen in den Kronen
Lag ein Karfunkelstein,
Der in dem Pallast schone
Aecht als ein Kertz erschein;
Auf jrem haupt das hare
War lauter und auch fein
Es leuchtet also klare
Recht als der Sonnen schein.

There in front of the crown
Lay a carbuncle-stone,
Which in the palace fair
Even as a taper seemed;
On her head the hair
Was glossy and also fine,
It shone as bright
Even as the sun's sheen.

. .

Die Magt die stand alleine,
Gar trawrig war jr mut;
Ihr farb und die war reine,
Lieblich we Milch und Blut:
Her durch jr zöpffe reinen
Schien jr hals als der Schnee:
Elberich dem viel Kleinen
That der Maget Jammer weh.

The maid she stood alone,
Right sad was her mind;
Her colour it was pure,
Lovely as milk and blood:
Out through her pure locks
Shone her neck like the snow.
Elberich the very small
Was touched with the maiden's sorrow.

Happy man was Kaiser Ottnit, blessed with such a wife, after all his travail;—had not the Turk Machabol cunningly sent him, in revenge, a box of young Dragons, or Dragon-eggs, by the hands of a caitiff Infidel, contriver of the mischief; by whom in due course of time they were hatched and nursed, to the infinite wo of all Lampartei, and ultimately to the death of Kaiser

Ottnit himself, whom they swallowed and attempted to digest, once without effect, but the next time too fatally, crown and all!

'*Part Second* announceth (*meldet*) of Herr Hugdie-
'trich and his son Wolfdietrich; how they for justice-
'sake, oft by their doughty acts succoured distressed
'persons, with other bold heroes that stood by them in
'extremity.'

Concerning which Hugdietrich, Emperor of Greece, and his son Wolfdietrich, one day the renowned Dietrich of Bern, we can here say little more than that the former trained himself to sempstress-work; and for many weeks, plied his needle, before he could get wedded and produce Wolfdietrich; who coming into the world in this clandestine manner, was let down into the castle-ditch, and like Romulus and Remus nursed by a Wolf, whence his name. However, after never-imagined adventures, with enchanters and enchantresses, pagans, and giants, in all quarters of the globe, he finally, with utmost effort, slaughtered those Lombardy Dragons; then married Kaiser Ottnit's widow, whom he had rather flirted with before; and so lived universally respected in his new empire, performing yet other notable achievements. One strange property he had, sometimes useful to him, sometimes hurtful: that his breath, when he became angry, grew flame, red-hot, and would take the temper out of swords. We find him again in the *Nibelungen*, among King Etzel's (Attila's) followers; a staid, cautious, yet still invincible man; on which occasion, though with great reluctance, he is forced to interfere, and does so with effect. Dietrich is the favourite hero of all those South-

ern Fictions, and well acknowledged in the Northern also, where the chief man, however, as we shall find, is not he but Siegfried.

'*Part Third* sheweth of the Rose-garden at Worms, 'which was planted by Chrimhilte, King Gibich's 'daughter; whereby afterwards most part of those 'Heroes and Giants came to destruction and were 'slain.'

In this Third Part the Southern or Lombard Heroes come into contact and collision with another as notable, Northern class; and for us much more important. Chriemhild, whose ulterior history makes such a figure in the *Nibelungen*, had, it would seem, near the ancient City of Worms, a Rose-garden, some seven English miles in circuit; fenced only by a silk thread; wherein, however, she maintained Twelve stout fighting men; several of whom, as Hagen, Volker, her three Brothers, above all the gallant Siegfried her betrothed, we shall meet with again: these, so unspeakable was their prowess, sufficed to defend the silk-thread Garden against all mortals. Our good antiquary, Von der Hagen, imagines that this Rose-garden business (in the primeval Tradition) glances obliquely at the Ecliptic with its Twelve Signs, at Jupiter's fight with the Titans, and we know not what confused skirmishing in the Utgard, or Asgard, or Midgard of the Scandinavians. Be this as it may, Chriemhild, we are here told, being very beautiful, and very wilful, boasts, in the pride of her heart, that no heroes on earth are to be compared with hers; and hearing accidently that Dietrich of Bern has a high character in this line, forthwith challenges him to visit Worms, and with eleven picked men, to do battle there against those

other Twelve champions of Christendom that watch her Rose-garden. Dietrich, in a towering passion at the style of the message, which was 'surly and stout,' instantly pitches upon his eleven seconds, who also are to be principals; and with a retinue of other sixty thousand, by quick stages, in which obstacles enough are overcome, reaches Worms, and declares himself ready. Among these eleven Lombard heroes of his, are likewise several whom we meet with again in the *Nibelungen*; beside Dietrich himself, we have the old Duke Hildebrand, Wolfhart, Ortwin. Notable among them, in another way, is Monk Ilsan, a truculent, grey-bearded fellow, equal to any Friar Tuck in *Robin Hood*.

The conditions of fight are soon agreed on: there are to be twelve successive duels, each challenger being expected to find his match; and the prize of victory is a Rose-garland from Chriemhild, and *ein Helssen und ein Küssen*, that is to say virtually, one kiss from her fair lips, to each. But here as it ever should do, Pride gets a fall; for Chriemhild's bully-hectors are, in divers ways, all successively felled to the ground by the Berners; some of whom, as old Hildebrand, will not even take her Kiss when it is due: even Siegfried himself, most reluctantly engaged with by Dietrich, and for a while victorious, is at last forced to seek shelter in her lap. Nay, Monk Ilsan, after the regular fight is over, and his part in it well performed, calls out, in succession, fifty-two other idle Champions of the Garden, part of them Giants, and routs the whole fraternity; thereby earning, besides his own regular allowance, fifty-two spare Garlands, and fifty-two several Kisses; in the course of which latter, Chriemhild's cheek, a just punishment as seemed, was scratched to the drawing of

blood by his rough beard. It only remains to be added that King Gibich, Chriemhild's Father, is now fain to do homage for his kingdom to Dietrich; who returns triumphant to his own country; where also, Monk Ilsan, according to promise, distributes these fifty-two Garlands among his fellow Friars, crushing a garland on the bare crown of each, till 'the red blood ran over their ears.' Under which hard, but not undeserved treatment, they all agreed to pray for remission of Ilsan's sins: indeed, such as continued refractory he tied together by the beards, and hung pair-wise over poles; whereby the stoutest soon gave in.

So endeth here this ditty
Of strife from woman's pride:
God on our griefs take pity,
And Mary still by us abide.

'In *Part Fourth* is announced (*gemelt*) of the little 'King Laurin, the Dwarf, how he encompassed his 'Rose-garden with so great manhood and art-magic, 'till at last he was vanquished by the heroes, and forced 'to become their Juggler, with &c. &c.'

Of which Fourth and happily last part we shall here say nothing; inasmuch as, except that certain of our old heroes again figure there, it has no coherence or connexion with the rest of the *Heldenbuch;* and is simply a new tale, which by way of episode Heinrich von Ofterdingen, as we learn from his own words, had subsequently appended thereto. He says:

Heinrich von Ofterdingen
This story hath been singing,
To the joy of Princes bold,
They gave him silver and gold,

Moreover pennies and garments rich:
Here endeth this Book the which
Doth sing our noble Heroes' story:
God help us all to heavenly glory.

Such is some outline of the famous *Heldenbuch*; on which it is not our business here to add any criticism. The fact that it has so long been popular betokens a certain worth in it; the kind and degree of which is also in some measure apparent. In poetry 'the rude 'man,' it has been said, 'requires only to see something 'going on; the man of more refinement wishes to 'feel; the truly refined man must be made to reflect.' For the first of these classes our *Hero-Book*, as has been apparent enough, provides in abundance; for the other two scantily, indeed for the second not at all. Nevertheless our estimate of this work, which as a series of Antique Traditions may have considerable meaning, is apt rather to be too low. Let us remember that this is not the original *Heldenbuch* which we now see; but only a version of it into the Knight-errant dialect of the thirteenth, indeed partly of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with all the fantastic monstrosities, now so trivial, pertaining to that style; under which disguises the really antique earnest groundwork, interesting as old Thought, if not as old Poetry, is all but quite obscured from us. But Antiquarian diligence is now busy with the *Heldenbuch* also, from which what light is in it will doubtless be elicited, and here and there a deformity removed. Though the Ethiop cannot change his skin, there is no need that even he should go abroad unwashed.*

* Our inconsiderable knowledge of the *Heldenbuch* is derived from various secondary sources; chiefly from Lessing's *Werke*

Casper von Roen, or whoever was the ultimate redactor of the *Heldenbuch*, whom Lessing designates as 'a highly ill-informed man,' would have done better had he quite omitted that little King Laurin, 'and his little Rose-garden,' which properly is no Rose-garden at all; and instead thereof introduced the *Gehörnte Siegfried* (Behorned Siegfried), whose history lies at the heart of the whole Northern Traditions; and, under a rude prose dress, is to this day a real child's-book and people's-book among the Germans. Of this Siegfried we have already seen somewhat in the Rose-garden at Worms; and shall ere long see much more elsewhere; for he is the chief hero of the *Nibelungen:* indeed nowhere can we dip into those old Fictions, whether in Scandinavia or the Rhine-land, but under one figure or another, whether as Dragon-killer and Prince-royal, or as Blacksmith and Horse-subduer, as Sigurd, Sivrit, Siegfried, we are sure to light on him. As his early adventures belong to the strange sort, and will afterwards concern us not a little, we shall here endeavour to piece together some consistent outline of them; so far indeed as it may be possible, for his biographers, agreeing in the main points, differ widely in the details.

First, then, let no one from the title *Gehörnte* (Horned, Behorned), fancy that our brave Siegfried,

---

(B. XIII.), where the reader will find an epitome of the whole Poem, with Extracts by Herr Fülleborn, from which the above are taken. A still more accessible and larger Abstract, with long specimens translated into verse, stands in the *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (p. 45-167). Von der Hagen has since been employed specially on the *Heldenbuch;* with what result we have not yet learned,

who was the loveliest as well as the bravest of men, was actually cornuted, and had horns on his brow, though like Michael Angelo's Moses; or even that his skin, to which the epithet *Behorned* refers, was hard like a crocodile's, and not softer than the softest shamoy: for the truth is, his Hornedness means only an Invulnerability, like that of Achilles, which he came by in the following manner. All men agree that Siegfried was a king's son; he was born, as we here have good reason to know, 'at Santen in Netherland,' of Siegemund and the fair Siegelinde; yet by some family misfortune or discord, of which the accounts are very various, he came into singular straits during boyhood; having passed that happy period of life, not under the canopies of costly state, but by the sooty stithy, in one Mimer a Blacksmith's shop. Here, however, he was nowise in his proper element; ever quarrelling with his fellow-apprentices; nay, as some say, breaking the hardest anvils into shivers by his too stout hammering. So that Mimer, otherwise a first-rate Smith, could by no means do with him there. He sends him, accordingly, to the neighbouring forest, to fetch charcoal; well aware that a monstrous Dragon, one Regin, the Smith's own Brother, would meet him and devour him. But far otherwise it proved; Siegfried by main force slew this Dragon, or rather Dragonized Smith's-Brother; made broth of him; and, warned by some significant phenomena, bathed therein: or, as others assert, bathed directly in the monster's blood, without cookery; and hereby attained that Invulnerability, complete in all respects, save that between his shoulders, where a lime-tree-leaf chanced to settle and stick during the process,

there was one little spot, a fatal spot as afterwards turned out, left in its natural state.

Siegfried, now seeing through the craft of the Smith, returned home and slew him; then set forth in search of adventures, the bare catalogue of which were long to recite. We mention only two, as subsequently of moment both for him and for us. He is by some said to have courted, and then jilted, the fair and proud Queen Brunhild of Isenland; nay to have thrown down the seven gates of her Castle; and then ridden off with her wild-horse Gana, having mounted him in the meadow, and instantly broken him. Some cross passages between him and Queen Brunhild, who understood no jesting, there must clearly have been, so angry is her recognition of him in the *Nibelungen*; nay, she bears a lasting grudge against him there; as he, and indeed she also, one day too sorely felt.

His other grand adventure is with the two sons of the deceased King Nibelung, in Nibelungen-land: these two youths, to whom their father had bequeathed a Hoard or Treasure, beyond all price or computation, Siegfried, 'riding by alone,' found on the side of a mountain, in a state of great perplexity. They had brought out the Treasure from the cave where it usually lay; but how to part it was the difficulty; for, not to speak of gold, there were as many jewels alone 'as 'twelve waggons in four days and nights, each going 'three journeys could carry away;' nay, 'however much you took from it, there was no diminution:' besides in real property, a Sword, Balmung, of great potency; a Divining-rod 'which gave power over every one;' and a *Tarnkappe* (or Cloak of Darkness), which not only

rendered the wearer invisible, but also gave him twelve men's strength. So that the two Princes Royal, without counsel save from their Twelve stupid Giants, knew not how to fall upon any amicable arrangement; and, seeing Siegfried ride by so opportunely, requested him to be arbiter; offering also the Sword Balmung for his trouble. Siegfried, who readily undertook the impossible problem, did his best to accomplish it; but, of course, without effect; nay, the two Nibelungen Princes, being of choleric temper, grew impatient, and provoked him; whereupon, with the Sword Balmung he slew them both, and their Twelve Giants (perhaps originally Signs of the Zodiac) to boot. Thus did the famous *Nibelungen Hort* (Hoard), and indeed the whole Nibelungen-land come into his possession: wearing the Sword Balmung, and having slain the two Princes and their Champions, what was there farther to oppose him? Vainly did the Dwarf Alberich, our old friend Elberich of the *Heldenbuch*, who had now become special keeper of this Hoard, attempt some resistance with a Dwarf Army; he was driven back into the cave; plundered of his *Tarnkappe;* and obliged with all his myrmidons to swear fealty to the conqueror, whom indeed thenceforth he and they punctually obeyed.

Whereby Siegfried might now farther style himself King of the Nibelungen; master of the infinite Nibelungen Hoard (collected doubtless by art-magic in the beginning of Time, in the deep bowels of the Universe) with the *Wünschelruthe* (Wishing or Divining rod) pertaining thereto; owner of the *Tarnkappe*, which he ever after kept by him, to put on at will; and though last

not least, Bearer and Wielder of the Sword Balmung,* by the keen edge of which all this gain had come to

* By this Sword Balmung also hangs a tale. Doubtless it was one of those invaluable weapons sometimes fabricated by the old Northern Smiths, compared with which our modern Foxes, and Ferraras, and Toledos, are mere leaden tools. Von der Hagen seems to think it simply the Sword Mimung under another name; in which case Siegfried's old master, Mimer, had been the maker of it, and called it after himself, as if it had been his son. In Scandinavian chronicles, veridical or not, we have the following account of that transaction. Mimer (or, as some have it, surely without ground, one Velint, once an apprentice of his) was challenged by another Craftsman, named Amilias, who boasted that he had made a suit of armour which no stroke could dint,—to equal that feat, or own himself the second Smith then extant. This last the stout Mimer would in no case do, but proceeded to forge the Sword Mimung; with which, when it was finished, he, 'in presence of the King,' cut asunder 'a thread of wool floating on water.' This would have seemed a fair fire-edge to most smiths: not so to Mimer; he sawed the blade in pieces, welded it in 'a red-hot fire for three days,' tempered it 'with milk and oatmeal,' and by much other cunning, brought out a sword that severed 'a ball of wool floating on water.' But neither would this suffice him; he returned to his smithy, and by means known only to himself, produced, in the course of seven weeks, a third and final edition of Mimung, which split asunder a whole floating pack of wool. The comparative trial now took place forthwith. Amilias, cased in his impenetrable coat of mail, sat down on a bench, in presence of assembled thousands, and bade Mimer strike him. Mimer fetched of course his best blow, on which Amilias observed, that there was a strange feeling of cold iron in his inwards. "Shake thyself," said Mimer; the luckless wight did so, and fell in two halves, being cleft sheer through from collar to haunch, never more to swing hammer in this world.—See *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 31.

him. To which last acquisitions, adding his previously acquired Invulnerability, and his natural dignities as Prince of Netherland, he might well shew himself before the foremost at Worms or elsewhere; and attempt any the highest adventure that fortune could cut out for him. However, his subsequent history belongs all to the *Nibelungen Song;* at which fair garden of poesy we are now, through all these shaggy wildernesses and enchanted woods, finally arrived.

Apart from its antiquarian value, and not only as by far the finest monument of old German art; but intrinsically, and as a mere detached composition, this *Nibelungen* has an excellence that cannot but surprise us. With little preparation, any reader of poetry, even in these days, might find it interesting. It is not without a certain Unity of interest and purport, an internal coherence and completeness; it is a Whole, and some spirit of Music informs it: these are the highest characteristics of a true Poem. Considering farther what intellectual environment we now find it in, it is doubly to be prized and wondered at; for it differs from those *Hero-books*, as molten or carved metal does from rude agglomerated ore; almost as some Shakspeare from his fellow Dramatists, whose *Tamburlaines* and *Island Princesses*, themselves not destitute of merit, first shew us clearly in what pure loftiness and loneliness the *Hamlets* and *Tempests* reign.

The unknown Singer of the *Nibelungen*, though no Shakspeare, must have had a deep, poetic soul; wherein things discontinuous and inanimate shaped themselves together into life, and the Universe with its wondrous

purport stood significantly imaged; overarching, as with heavenly firmaments and eternal harmonies, the little scene where men strut and fret their hour. His Poem, unlike so many old and new pretenders to that name, has a basis and organic structure, a beginning, middle, and end; there is one great principle and idea set forth in it, round which all its multifarious parts combine in living union. Remarkable it is, moreover, how along with this essence and primary condition of all poetic virtue, the minor external virtues of what we call Taste, and so forth, are, as it were, presupposed; and the living soul of Poetry being there, its body of incidents, its garment of language, come of their own accord. So too, in the case of Shakspeare: his feeling of propriety, as compared with that of the Marlowes and Fletchers, his quick sure sense of what is fit and unfit, either in act or word, might astonish us, had he no other superiority. But true Inspiration, as it may well do, includes that same Taste, or rather a far higher and heartfelt Taste, of which that other 'elegant' species is but an ineffectual, irrational apery: let us see the herald Mercury actually descend from his Heaven, and the bright wings, and the graceful movement of these, will not be wanting.

With an instinctive art, far different from acquired artifice, this Poet of the *Nibelungen*, working in the same province with his contemporaries of the *Heldenbuch*, on the same material of tradition, has, in a wonderful degree, possessed himself of what these could only strive after; and with his 'clear feeling of fictitious truth,' avoided as false the errors and monstrous perplexities in which they vainly struggled. He is of

another species than they; in language, in purity and depth of feeling, in fineness of invention, stands quite apart from them.

The language of the *Heldenbuch*, as we saw above, was a feeble half-articulate child's-speech, the metre nothing better than a miserable doggerel; whereas here in the old Frankish (*Oberdeutsch*) dialect of the *Nibelungen*, we have a clear decisive utterance, and in a real system of verse, not without essential regularity, great liveliness, and now and then even harmony of rhythm. Doubtless we must often call it a diffuse diluted utterance; at the same time it is genuine, with a certain antique garrulous heartiness, and has a rhythm in the thoughts as well as the words. The simplicity is never silly; even in that perpetual recurrence of epithets, sometimes of rhymes, as where two words, for instance *lip* (body, life, *leib*) and *wip* (woman, wife, *weib*) are indissolubly wedded together, and the one never shews itself without the other following,—there is something which reminds us not so much of poverty, as of trustfulness and childlike innocence. Indeed a strange charm lies in those old tones, where, in gay dancing melodies, the sternest tidings are sung to us; and deep floods of Sadness and Strife play lightly in little curling billows, like seas in summer. It is as a meek smile, in whose still, thoughtful depths a whole infinitude of patience, and love, and heroic strength lie revealed. But in other cases too, we have seen this outward sport and inward earnestness offer grateful contrast, and cunning excitement; for example, in Tasso; of whom, though otherwise different enough, this old Northern Singer has more than once reminded us. There too, as here, we have a

dark solemn meaning in light guise; deeds of high temper, harsh self-denial, daring and death, stand embodied in that soft, quick-flowing, joyfully-modulated verse. Nay, farther, as if the implement, much more than we might fancy, had influenced the work done, these two Poems, could we trust our individual feeling, have in one respect the same poetical result for us: in the *Nibelungen* as in the *Gerusalemme*, the persons and their story are indeed brought vividly before us, yet not near and palpably present; it is rather as if we looked on that scene through an inverted telescope, whereby the whole was carried far away into the distance, the life-large figures compressed into brilliant miniatures, so clear, so real, yet tiny, elf-like, and beautified as well as lessened, their colours being now closer and brighter, the shadows and trivial features no longer visible. This, as we partly apprehend, comes of *singing* Epic Poems; most part of which only pretend to be sung. Tasso's rich melody still lives among the Italian people; the *Nibelungen* also is what it professes to be, a *Song*.

No less striking than the verse and language is the quality of the invention manifested here. Of the Fable, or narrative material of the *Nibelungen*, we should say that it had high, almost the highest merit; so daintily yet firmly is it put together; with such felicitous selection of the beautiful, the essential, and no less felicitous rejection of whatever was unbeautiful or even extraneous. The reader is no longer afflicted with that chaotic brood of Fire-drakes, Giants, and malicious turbaned Turks, so fatally rife in the *Heldenbuch:* all this is swept away, or only hovers in faint shadows afar off; and free field is open for legitimate perennial interests. Yet

neither is the *Nibelungen* without its wonders; for it is poetry and not prose; here too, a supernatural world encompasses the natural, and, though at rare intervals and in calm manner, reveals itself there. It is truly wonderful with what skill our simple untaught Poet deals with the marvellous; admitting it without reluctance or criticism, yet precisely in the degree and shape that will best avail him. Here, if in no other respect, we should say that he has a decided superiority to Homer himself. The whole story of the *Nibelungen* is fateful, mysterious, guided on by unseen influences; yet the actual marvels are few, and done in the far distance; those Dwarfs, and Cloaks of Darkness, and charmed Treasure-caves, are heard of rather than beheld, the tidings of them seem to issue from unknown space. Vain were it to inquire where that Nibelungen-land specially is: its very name is *Nebel-land*, or *Nifl-land*, the land of Darkness, of Invisibility. The 'Nibelungen Heroes' that muster in thousands and tens of thousands, though they march to the Rhine or Danube, and we see their strong limbs and shining armour, we could almost fancy to be children of the air. Far beyond the firm horizon, that wonder-bearing region swims on the infinite waters; unseen by bodily eye, or at most discerned as a faint streak, hanging in the blue depths, uncertain whether island or cloud. And thus the *Nibelungen Song*, though based on the bottomless foundations of Spirit, and not unvisited of skyey messengers, is a real, rounded, habitable Earth, where we find firm footing, and the wondrous and the common live amicably together. Perhaps it would be difficult to find any Poet of ancient or modern times, who in this trying

problem has steered his way with greater delicacy and success.

To any of our readers, who may have personally studied the *Nibelungen*, these high praises of ours will not seem exaggerated: the rest, who are the vast majority, must endeavour to accept them with some degree of faith, at least of curiosity; to vindicate, and judicially substantiate them would far exceed our present opportunities. Nay, in any case, the criticism, the alleged Characteristics of a Poem are so many Theorems, which are indeed enunciated, truly or falsely, but the Demonstration of which must be sought for in the reader's own study and experience. Nearly all that can be attempted here, is some hasty epitome of the mere Narrative; no substantial image of the work, but a feeble outline and shadow. To which task, as the personages and their environment have already been in some degree illustrated, we can now proceed without obstacle.

The *Nibelungen* has been called the Northern Epos; yet it has, in great part, a Dramatic character: those thirty-nine *Aventiuren* (Adventures), which it consists of, might be so many scenes in a Tragedy. The catastrophe is dimly prophesied from the beginning; and, at every fresh step, rises more and more clearly into view. A shadow of coming Fate, as it were, a low inarticulate voice of Doom falls, from the first, out of that charmed Nibelungen-land: the discord of two women, is as a little spark of evil passion, which ere long enlarges itself into a crime; foul murder is done; and now the Sin rolls on like a devouring fire, till the guilty and the innocent are alike encircled with it, and a whole land is ashes, and a whole race is swept away.

Uns ist in alten mæren Wunders vil geseit,
Von helden lobebæren Von grozer chuonheit,
Von vrouden und' hoch-geziten Von weinen und von chlagen
Von chuner rechen striten Muget ir nu wunder hören sagen.

We find in ancient story, Wonders many told,
Of heroes in great glory With spirit free and bold;
Of joyances, and high-tides, Of weeping and of woe,
Of noble Recken striving, Mote ye now wonders know.

This is the brief artless Proem; and the promise contained in it proceeds directly towards fulfilment. In the very second stanza, we learn:

Es wühs in Burgonden Ein vil edel magedin,
Das in allen landen Niht schoners mohte sin
Chriemhilt was si geheien Si wart ein sohöne wip
Darumbe müsen degene Vil verliesen den lip.

A right noble maiden Did grow in Burgundy,
That in all lands of earth Nought fairer mote there be;
Chriemhild of Worms she hight, She was a fairest *wife:*
For the which must warriors A many lose their life.*

Chriemhild, this world's-wonder, a king's daughter and king's sister, and no less coy and proud than fair,

* This is the first of a thousand instances, in which the two inseparables, *wip* and *lip*, or in modern tongue, *weib* and *leib*, as mentioned above, appear together.* From these two opening stanzas of the *Nibelungen Lied*, in its purest form, the reader may obtain some idea of the versification; it runs on in more or less regular Alexandrines, with a cæsural pause in each, where the capital letter occurs; indeed, the lines seem originally to have been divided into two at that point, for sometimes, as in Stanza First, the middle words (*mæren, lobebæren; geziten, striten*) also rhyme; but this is rather a rare case. The word *rechen* or

dreams one night that 'she had petted a falcon, strong, 'beautiful, and wild; which two eagles snatched away 'from her: this she was forced to see; greater sorrow 'felt she never in the world.' Her mother, Ute, to whom she relates the vision, soon redes it for her; the falcon is a noble husband, whom, God keep him, she must suddenly lose. Chriemhild declares warmly for the single state; as indeed, living there at the Court of Worms, with her brothers, Gunther, Gernot, Geiselher, 'three kings noble and rich,' in such pomp and renown, the pride of Burgunden-land and Earth, she might readily enough have changed for the worse. However, dame Ute bids her not be too emphatical; for 'if ever 'she have heartfelt joy in life, it will be from man's lov 'and she shall be a fair wife (*wip*), when God sends 'her a right worthy Ritter's *lip*.' Chriemhild is more in earnest than maidens usually are when they talk thus; it appears, she guarded against love 'for many a lief-long day;' nevertheless, she too must yield to destiny. 'Honourably she was to become a most noble Ritter's 'wife.' 'This,' adds the old Singer, 'was that same 'falcon she dreamed of: how sorely she since revenged 'him on her nearest kindred! For that one death died 'full many a mother's son.'

It may be observed that the Poet, here, and at all times, shews a marked partiality for Chriemhild; ever striving, unlike his fellow-singers, to magnify her worth,

recken, used in the First Stanza, is the constant designation for bold fighters, and has the same root with *rich* (thus in old French, *hommes riches*; in Spanish *ricos hombres*), which last is here also synonymous with *powerful*, and is applied to kings, and even to the Almighty, *Got dem richen*.

her faithfulness, and loveliness; and softening, as much as may be, whatever makes against her. No less a favourite with him is Siegfried, the prompt, gay, peaceably fearless hero; to whom, in the Second *Aventiure*, we are here suddenly introduced, at Santen (Xanten) the Court of Netherland; whither, to his glad parents, after achievements (to us partially known) 'of which one might sing and tell for ever,' that noble prince has returned. Much as he has done and conquered, he is but just arrived at man's years: it is on occasion of this joyful event, that a high-tide (*hochgezit*) is now held there, with infinite joustings, minstrelsy, largesses, and other chivalrous doings, all which is sung with utmost heartiness. The old King Siegemund offers to resign his crown to him; but Siegfried has other game a-field: the unparalleled beauty of Chriemhild has reached his ear and his fancy; and now he will to Worms, and woo her, at least 'see how it stands with her.' Fruitless is it for Siegemund and the mother Siegelinde to represent the perils of that enterprise, the pride of those Burgundian Gunthers and Gernots, the fierce temper of their uncle Hagen; Siegfried is as obstinate as young men are in these cases, and can hear no counsel. Nay, he will not accept the much more liberal proposition, to take an army with him, and conquer the country, if it must be so; he will ride forth, like himself, with twelve champions only, and so defy the future. Whereupon, the old people finding that there is no other course, proceed to make him clothes;*—at least, the good queen

* This is a never-failing preparative for all expeditions, and always specified and insisted on with a simple, loving, almost female impressiveness.

with 'her fair women sitting night and day,' and sewing, does so, the father furnishing noblest battle and riding gear;—and so dismiss him with many blessings and lamentations. 'For him wept sore the king and his 'wife, but he comforted both their bodies (*lip*); he said, "Ye must not weep, for my body ever shall ye be with-'out care."'

Sad was it to the Recken, Stood weeping many a maid,
I ween, their heart had them The tidings true foresaid
That of their friends so many Death thereby should find;
Cause had they of lamenting, Such boding in their mind.

Nevertheless, on the seventh morning, that adventurous company, 'ride up the sand,' on the Rhine-beach to Worms; in high temper, in dress and trappings, aspect and bearing, more than kingly.

Siegfried's reception at King Gunther's court, and his brave sayings and doings there for some time, we must omit. One fine trait of his chivalrous delicacy it is that, for a whole year, he never hints at his errand; never once sees or speaks of Chriemhild, whom, nevertheless, he is longing day and night to meet. She, on her side, has often through her lattices, noticed the gallant stranger, victorious in all tiltings and knightly exercises; whereby it would seem, in spite of her rigorous predeterminations, some kindness for him is already gliding in. Meanwhile, mighty wars and threats of invasion arise, and Siegfried does the state good service. Returning victorious, both as general and soldier, from Hessen (Hessia), where, by help of his own courage and the sword Balmung, he has captured a Danish king, and utterly discomfited a Saxon one; he can now shew

himself before Chriemhild without other blushes than those of timid love. Nay, the maiden has herself inquired pointedly of the messengers, touching his exploits; and 'her fair face grew rose-red when she heard them.' A gay High-tide, by way of triumph, is appointed; several kings, and two-and-thirty princes, and knights enough with 'gold-red saddles,' come to joust; and better than whole infinities of kings and princes with their saddles, the fair Chriemhild herself, under guidance of her mother, chiefly too in honour of the victor, is to grace that sport. 'Ute the full rich' fails not to set her needle-women to work, and 'clothes of price are taken from their presses,' for the love of her child, 'wherewith to deck many women and maids.' And now 'on the Whitsun-morning,' all is ready, and glorious as heart could desire it; brave Ritters, 'five thousand or more,' all glancing in the lists; but grander still, Chriemhild herself is advancing beside her mother, with a hundred body-guards, all sword-in-hand, and many a noble maid 'wearing rich raiment,' in her train!

'Now issued forth the lovely one (*minnechliche*), as the red morning doth from troubled clouds; much care fled away from him, who bore her in his heart, and long had done; he saw the lovely one stand in her beauty.

'There glanced from her garments full many precious stones, her rose-red colour shone full lovely: try what he might, each man must confess that in this world he had not seen aught so fair.

'Like as the light moon stands before the stars, and its sheen so clear goes over the clouds, even so stood she now before many fair women; whereat cheered was the mind of the hero.

'The rich chamberlains you saw go before her, the high spirited Recken would not forbear, but pressed on where they saw the lovely maiden. Siegfried the lord was both glad and sad.

'He thought in his mind, How could this be that I should woo thee? That was a foolish dream; yet must I for ever be a stranger, I were rather (*saufter*, softer) dead. He became, from these thoughts, in quick changes, pale and red.

'Thus stood so lovely the child of Siegelinde, as if he were limned on parchment by a master's art; for all granted that hero so beautiful they had never seen.'

In this passage, which we have rendered, from the Fifth *Aventiure*, into the closest prose, it is to be remarked, among other singularities, that there are two similes: in which figure of speech our old Singer deals very sparingly. The first, that comparison of Chriemhild to the moon among stars with its sheen going over the clouds, has now for many centuries had little novelty or merit; but the second, that of Siegfried to a Figure in some illuminated Manuscript, is graceful in itself; and unspeakably so to antiquaries, seldom honoured, in their Black-letter stubbing and grubbing, with such a poetic windfall.

A prince and a princess of this quality are clearly made for one another. Nay, on the motion of young Herr Gernot, fair Chriemhild is bid specially to salute Siegfried, she who had never before saluted man; which unparalleled grace the lovely one, in all courtliness, openly does him. "Be welcome," said she, "Herr Siegfried, a noble Ritter good;" from which salute, for this seems to have been all, 'much raised was his mind.' He bowed with graceful reverence, as his manner was with

women; she took him by the hand, and with fond stolen glances, they looked at each other. Whether in that ceremonial joining of hands there might not be some soft, slight pressure, of far deeper import, is what our Singer will not take upon him to say; however, he thinks the affirmative more probable. Henceforth, in that bright May weather, the two were seen constantly together: nothing but felicity around and before them.—In these days, truly, it must have been that the famous Prize-fight, with Dietrich of Bern and his Eleven Lombardy champions, took place, little to the profit of the two Lovers; were it not rather that the whole of that Rose-garden transaction, as given in the *Heldenbuch*, might be falsified and even imaginary; for no mention or hint of it occurs here. War or battle is not heard of; Siegfried the peerless walks wooingly by the side of Chriemhild the peerless: matters, it is evident, are in the best possible course.

But now comes a new side-wind, which, however, in the long-run also forwards the voyage. Tidings, namely, reached over the Rhine, not so surprising we might hope, 'that there was many a fair maiden;' whereupon Gunther the King 'thought with himself to win one of them.' It was an honest purpose in King Gunther, only his choice was not the discreetest. For no fair maiden will content him but Queen Brunhild, a lady who rules in *Isenland*, far over sea, famed indeed for her beauty, yet no less so for her caprices. Fables we have met with of this Brunhild being properly a *Valkyr*, or Scandinavian Houri, such as were wont to lead old northern warriors from their last battle-field, into Valhalla; and that her castle of *Isenstein* stood amidst a lake of fire;

97686

but this, as we said, is fable and groundless calumny, of which there is not so much as notice taken here. Brunhild, it is plain enough, was a flesh-and-blood maiden, glorious in look and faculty, only with some preternatural talents given her, and the strangest wayward habits. It appears, for example, that any suitor proposing for her has this brief condition to proceed upon: he must try the adorable in the three several games of hurling the Spear (at one another), Leaping, and throwing the Stone; if victorious, he gains her hand; if vanquished, he loses his own head; which latter issue, such is the fair Amazon's strength, frequent fatal experiment has shewn to be the only probable one.

Siegfried, who knows something of Brunhild and her ways, votes clearly against the whole enterprise; however, Gunther has once for all got the whim in him, and must see it out. The prudent Hagen von Troneg, uncle to love-sick Gunther, and ever true to him, then advises that Siegfried be requested to take part in the adventure; to which request Siegfried readily accedes on one condition: that, should they prove fortunate, he himself is to have Chriemhild to wife when they return. This readily settled, he now takes charge of the business, and throws a little light on it for the others. They must lead no army thither; only two, Hagen and Dankwart, besides the king and himself, shall go. The grand subject of *waete* * (clothes) is next hinted at, and in general terms elucidated; whereupon a solemn consultation with Chriemhild ensues; and a great cutting out, on her part,

* Hence our English *weeds*, and Scotch *wad* (pledge); and, say the etymologists, *wadding*, and even *wedding*.

of white silk from Araby, of green silk from Zazemang, of strange fish-skins covered with morocco silk; a great sewing thereof for seven weeks, on the part of her maids; lastly a fitting-on of the three suits by each hero, for each had three; and heartiest thanks in return, seeing all fitted perfectly, and was of grace and price unutterable. What is still more to the point, Siegfried takes his Cloak of Darkness with him, fancying he may need it there. The good old Singer, who has hitherto alluded only in the faintest way to Siegfried's prior adventures and miraculous possessions, introduces this of the *Tarnkappe* with great frankness and simplicity. 'Of 'wild dwarfs (*getwergen*),' says he, 'I have heard tell, 'they are in hollow mountains, and for defence wear 'somewhat called *Tarnkappe*, of wondrous sort;' the qualities of which garment, that it renders invisible, and gives twelve men's strength, are already known to us.

The voyage to Isenstein, Siegfried steering the ship thither, is happily accomplished in twenty days. Gunther admires to a high degree the fine masonry of the place; as indeed he well might, there being some eighty-six towers, three immense palaces, and one immense hall, the whole built of 'marble green as grass;' farther he sees many fair women looking from the windows down on the bark, and thinks the loveliest is she in the snow-white dress; which, Siegfried informs him, is a worthy choice; the snow-white maiden being no other than Brunhild. It is also to be kept in mind that Siegfried, for reasons known best to himself, had previously stipulated that, though a free king, they should all treat him as vassal of Gunther, for whom accordingly he holds the stirrup, as they mount on the beach; thereby giving

rise to a misconception, which in the end led to saddest consequences.

Queen Brunhild, who had called back her maidens from the windows, being a strict disciplinarian; and retired into the interior of her green marble Isenstein, to dress still better, now inquires of some attendant, Who these strangers of such lordly aspect are, and what brings them? The attendant professes himself at a loss to say; one of them looks like Siegfried, the other is evidently by his port a noble king. His notice of Von Troneg Hagen is peculiarly vivid:

The third of those companions He is of aspect stern,
And yet with lovely body, Rich queen, as ye might discern;
From those *his rapid glances*, For the eyes nought rest in him,
Meseems this foreign Recke Is of temper fierce and grim.

This is one of those little graphic touches, scattered all over our Poem, which do more for picturing out an object, especially a man, than whole pages of enumeration and mensuration. Never after do we hear of this stout indomitable Hagen, in all the wild deeds and sufferings he passes through, but those *swinden blicken* of his come before us, with the restless, deep, dauntless spirit that looks through them.

Brunhild's reception of Siegfried is not without tartness; which, however, he, with polished courtesy, and the nimblest address, ever at his command, softens down, or hurries over: he is here, without will of his own, and so forth, only as attendant on his master; the renowned King Gunther, who comes to sue for her hand, as the summit and keystone of all earthly blessings. Brunhild, who had determined on fighting Siegfried

himself, if he so willed it, makes small account of this king Gunther or his prowess; and instantly clears the ground, and equips her for battle. The royal wooer must have looked a little blank when he saw a shield brought in for his fair one's handling, 'three spans thick with gold and iron,' which four chamberlains could hardly bear, and a spear or javelin she meant to shoot or hurl, which was a burthen for three. Hagen, in angry apprehension for his king and nephew, exclaims that they shall all lose their life (*lip*), and that she is the *tiuvels wip*, or Devil's wife. Nevertheless Siegfried is already there in his Cloak of Darkness, twelve men strong, and privily whispers in the ear of royalty to be of comfort; takes the shield to himself, Gunther only affecting to hold it, and so fronts the edge of battle. Brunhild performs prodigies of spear-hurling, of leaping, and stone-pitching; but Gunther, or rather Siegfried, 'who does the work, he only acting the gestures,' nay who even snatches him up into the air, and leaps carrying him,—gains a decided victory, and the lovely Amazon must own with surprise and shame, that she is fairly won. Siegfried presently appears without *Tarnkappe*, and asks with a grave face, When the games then are to begin?

So far well; yet somewhat still remains to be done. Brunhild will not sail for Worms, to be wedded, till she have assembled a fit train of warriors; wherein the Burgundians, being here without retinue, see symptoms or possibilities of mischief. The deft Siegfried, ablest of men, again knows a resource. In his *Tarnkappe* he steps on board the bark, which seen from the shore, appears to drift off of its own accord; and therein,

stoutly steering towards *Nibelungen-land*, he reaches that mysterious country and the mountain where his Hoard lies, before the second morning; finds Dwarf Alberich and all his giant sentinels at their post, and faithful almost to the death; these soon rouse him thirty thousand Nibelungen Recken, from whom he has only to choose one thousand of the best; equip them splendidly enough; and therewith return to Gunther, simply as if they were that sovereign's own body-guard, that had been delayed a little by stress of weather.

The final arrival at Worms; the bridal feasts, for there are two, Siegfried also receiving his reward; and the joyance and splendour of man and maid, at this lordliest of high-tides; and the joustings, greater than those at Aspramont or Montauban,—every reader can fancy for himself. Remarkable only is the evil eye with which queen Brunhild still continues to regard the noble Siegfried. She cannot understand how Gunther, the Landlord of the Rhine,* should have bestowed his sister on a vassal: the assurance that Siegfried also is a prince and heir-apparent, the prince namely of Netherland, and little inferior to Burgundian majesty itself, yields no complete satisfaction; and Brunhild hints plainly that, unless the truth be told her, unpleasant consequences may follow. Thus is there ever a ravelled thread in the web of life! But for this little cloud of spleen, these bridal feasts had been all bright and balmy as the month of June. Unluckily, too, the cloud is an electric one;

* *Der Wirt vom Rine:* singular enough the word *Wirth*, often applied to royalty in that old dialect, is now also the title of innkeepers. To such base uses may we come.

spreads itself in time into a general earthquake; nay that very night becomes a thunder-storm, or tornado, unparalleled we may hope in the annals of connubial happiness.

The Singer of the *Nibelungen*, unlike the Author of *Roderick Random*, cares little for intermeddling with 'the chaste mysteries of Hymen.' Could we, in the corrupt ambiguous modern tongue, hope to exhibit any shadow of the old simple true-hearted, merely historical spirit, with which, in perfect purity of soul, he describes things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme, —we could a tale unfold! Suffice it to say, king Gunther, Landlord of the Rhine, falling sheer down from the third heaven of hope, finds his spouse the most athletic and intractable of women; and himself, at the close of the adventure, nowise encircled in her arms, but tied hard and fast, hand and foot, in her girdle, and hung thereby, at considerable elevation, on a nail in the wall. Let any reader of sensibility figure the emotions of the royal breast, there as he vibrates suspended on his peg, and his inexorable bride sleeping sound in her bed below! Towards morning he capitulates; engaging to observe the prescribed line of conduct with utmost strictness, so he may but avoid becoming a laughing-stock to all men.

No wonder the dread king looked rather grave next morning, and received the congratulations of mankind in a cold manner. He confesses to Siegfried, who partly suspects how it may be, that he has brought the 'evil devil' home to his house in the shape of wife, whereby he is wretched enough. However, there are remedies for all things but death. The ever-serviceable

Siegfried undertakes even here to make the crooked straight. What may not an honest friend with Tarnkappe and twelve men's strength perform? Proud Brunhild, next night, after a fierce contest, owns herself again vanquished; Gunther is there to reap the fruits of another's victory; the noble Siegfried withdraws, taking nothing with him but the luxury of doing good, and the proud queen's Ring and Girdle gained from her in that struggle; which small trophies he, with the last infirmity of a noble mind, presents to his own fond wife, little dreaming that they would one day cost him and her, and all of them, so dear. Such readers as take any interest in poor Gunther will be gratified to learn, that from this hour Brunhild's preternatural faculties quite left her, being all dependent on her maidhood; so that any more spear-hurling, or other the like extraordinary work, is not to be apprehended from her.

If we add that Siegfried formally made over to his dear Chriemhild the Nibelungen Hoard, by way of *Morgengabe* (or, as we may say, Jointure); and the high-tide, though not the honey-moon being past, returned to Netherland with his spouse, to be welcomed there with infinite rejoicings,—we have gone through as it were the First Act of this Tragedy; and may here pause to look round us for a moment. The main characters are now introduced on the scene, the relations that bind them together are dimly sketched out: there is the prompt, cheerfully heroic, invulnerable and invincible Siegfried, now happiest of men; the high Chriemhild, fitly-mated, and if a moon, revolving glorious round her sun, or *Friedel* (joy and darling); not without pride and female aspirings, yet not prouder

than one so gifted and placed is pardonable for being. On the other hand, we have King Gunther, or rather let us say king's-mantle Gunther, for never except in that one enterprise of courting Brunhild, in which too, without help, he would have cut so poor a figure, does the worthy sovereign shew will of his own, or character other than that of good potter's clay; farther, the suspicious, forecasting, yet stout and reckless Hagen, him with the *rapid glances*, and these turned not too kindly on Siegfried, whose prowess he has used yet dreads, whose Nibelungen Hoard he perhaps already covets; lastly, the rigorous and vigorous Brunhild, of whom also more is to be feared than hoped. Considering the fierce nature of these now mingled ingredients; and how, except perhaps in the case of Gunther, there is no menstruum of placid stupidity to soften them; except in Siegfried, no element of heroic truth to master them and bind them together,—unquiet fermentation may readily be apprehended.

Meanwhile, for a season all is peace and sunshine. Siegfried reigns in Netherland, of which his father has surrendered him the crown; Chriemhild brings him a son, whom in honour of the uncle he christens Gunther, which courtesy the uncle and Brunhild repay in kind. The Nibelungen Hoard is still open and inexhaustible; Dwarf Alberich and all the Recken there still loyal; outward relations friendly, internal supremely prosperous: these are halcyon days. But, alas, they cannot last. Queen Brunhild, retaining with true female tenacity her first notion, right or wrong, reflects one day that Siegfried, who is and shall be nothing but her husband's vassal, has for a long while paid him no

service; and, determined on a remedy, manages that Siegfried and his queen shall be invited to a high-tide at Worms, where opportunity may chance for enforcing that claim. Thither accordingly, after ten years' absence, we find these illustrious guests returning; Siegfried escorted by a thousand Nibelungen Ritters, and farther by his father Siegemund who leads a train of Netherlanders. Here for eleven days, amid infinite joustings, there is a true heaven-on-earth: but the apple of discord is already lying in the knightly ring, and two Women, the proudest and keenest-tempered of the world, simultaneously stoop to lift it. *Aventiure* Fourteenth is entitled 'How the two queens rated one another.' Never was courtlier Billingsgate uttered, or which came more directly home to the business and bosoms of women. The subject is that old story of Precedence, which indeed, from the time of Cain and Abel downwards, has wrought such effusion of blood and bile both among men and women; lying at the bottom of all armaments and battle-fields, whether Blenheims and Waterloos, or only plate-displays, and tongue-and-eye skirmishes, in the circle of domestic Tea: nay, the very animals have it; and horses, were they but the miserablest Shelties and Welsh ponies, will not graze together till it has been ascertained, by clear fight, who is master of whom, and a proper drawing-room etiquette established.

Brunhild and Chriemhild take to arguing about the merits of their husbands: the latter, fondly expatiating on the pre-eminence of her *Friedel*, how he walks 'like the moon among stars' before all other men, is reminded by her sister that one man at least must be excepted, the

mighty King Gunther of Worms, to whom by his own confession long ago at Isenstein, he is vassal and servant. Chriemhild will sooner admit that clay is above sunbeams, than any such proposition; which therefore she, in all politeness, requests of her sister never more to touch upon while she lives. The result may be foreseen: rejoinder follows reply, statement grows assertion; flint-sparks have fallen on the dry flax, which from smoke bursts into conflagration. The two queens part in hottest, though still clear-flaming anger. Not, however, to let their anger burn out, but only to feed it with more solid fuel. Chriemhild dresses her forty maids in finer than royal apparel; orders out all her husband's Recken; and so attended, walks foremost to the Minster, where mass is to be said; thus practically asserting that she is not only a true queen, but the worthier of the two. Brunhild, quite outdone in splendour, and enraged beyond all patience, overtakes her at the door of the Minster, with peremptory order to stop: "before king's wife shall vassal's never go."

Then said the fair Chriemhilde, Right angry was her mood:
"Couldest thou but hold thy peace, It were surely for thy good,
Thyself hast all polluted With shame thy fair bodye;
How can a Concubine By right a King's wife be?"

"Whom hast thou Concubined?" The King's wife quickly spake;
"That do I thee," said Chriemhild; "For thy pride and vaunting's sake;
Who first had thy fair body Was Siegfried my beloved Man;
My Brother it was not That thy maidhood from thee wan."

In proof of which outrageous saying, she produces that

Ring and Girdle; the innocent conquest of which, as we well know, had a far other origin. Brunhild bursts into tears; 'sadder day she never saw.' Nay, perhaps a new light now rose on her over much that had been dark in her late history; 'she rued full sore that ever she was born.'

Here, then, is the black injury, which only blood will wash away. The evil fiend has begun his work; and the issue of it lies beyond man's control. Siegfried may protest his innocence of that calumny, and chastise his indiscreet spouse for uttering it even in the heat of anger: the female heart is wounded beyond healing; the old springs of bitterness against this hero unite into a fell flood of hate; while he sees the sunlight, she cannot know a joyful hour. Vengeance is soon offered her: Hagen, who lives only for his prince, undertakes this bad service; by treacherous professions of attachment, and anxiety to guard Siegfried's life, he gains from Chriemhild the secret of his vulnerability; Siegfried is carried out to hunt; and in the hour of frankest gaiety, is stabbed through the fatal spot; and, felling the murderer to the ground, dies upbraiding his false kindred, yet, with a touching simplicity, recommending his child and wife to their protection. '"Let her feel that she is 'your sister; was there ever virtue in princes, be true to 'her: for me my Father and my men shall long wait." 'The flowers all around were wetted with blood, then 'he struggled with death; not long did he this, the 'weapon cut him too keen; so he could speak, nought 'more, the Recke bold and noble.'

At this point, we might say, ends the Third Act of

our Tragedy; the whole story henceforth takes a darker character; it is as if a tone of sorrow and fateful boding became more and more audible in its free, light music. Evil has produced new evil in fatal augmentation: injury is abolished; but in its stead there is guilt and despair. Chriemhild, an hour ago so rich, is now robbed of all: her grief is boundless as her love has been. No glad thought can ever more dwell in her; darkness, utter night, has come over her, as she looked into the red of morning. The spoiler too walks abroad unpunished; the bleeding corpse witnesses against Hagen, nay he himself cares not to hide the deed. But who is there to avenge the friendless? Siegfried's Father has returned in haste to his own land; Chriemhild is now alone on the earth, her husband's grave is all that remains to her; there only can she sit, as if waiting at the threshold of her own dark home; and in prayers and tears, pour out the sorrow and love that have no end. Still farther injuries are heaped on her: by advice of the crafty Hagen, Gunther, who had not planned the murder, yet permitted and witnessed it, now comes with whining professions of repentance and good-will; persuades her to send for the Nibelungen Hoard to Worms; where no sooner is it arrived, than Hagen and the rest forcibly take it from her; and her last trust in affection or truth from mortal is rudely cut away. Bent to the earth, she weeps only for her lost Siegfried, knows no comfort, but will weep for ever.

One lurid gleam of hope, after long years of darkness, breaks in on her, in the prospect of revenge. King Etzel sends from his far country to solicit her hand: the embassy she hears at first, as a woman of ice might

do; the good Rudiger, Etzel's spokesman, pleads in vain that his king is the richest of all earthly kings; that he is so lonely 'since Frau Helke died;' that though a heathen he has Christians about him, and may one day be converted: till, at length, when he hints distantly at the power of Etzel to avenge her injuries, she on a sudden becomes all attention. Hagen, foreseeing such possibilities, protests against the match; but is overruled: Chriemhild departs with Rudiger for the land of the Huns; taking cold leave of her relations; only two of whom, her brothers Gernot and Giselher, innocent of that murder, does she admit near her as convoy to the Donau.

The Nibelungen Hoard has hitherto been fatal to all its possessors; to the two sons of Nibelung; to Siegfried its conqueror: neither does the Burgundian Royal House fare better with it. Already, discords threatening to arise, Hagen sees prudent to sink it in the Rhine; first taking oath of Gunther and his brothers, that none of them shall reveal the hiding-place, while any of the rest is alive. But the curse that clave to it could not be sunk there. The Nibelungen-land is now theirs: they themselves are henceforth called Nibelungen; and this history of their fate is the Nibelungen Song, or *Nibelungen Noth* (Nibelungen's Need, extreme need, or final wreck and abolition).

The Fifth Act of our strange eventful history now draws on. Chriemhild has a kind husband, of hospitable disposition, who troubles himself little about her secret feelings and intents. With his permission, she sends two minstrels, inviting the Burgundian Court to a high-tide at Etzel's: she has charged the messengers

to say that she is happy, and to bring all Gunther's champions with them. Her eye was on Hagen, but she could not single him from the rest. After seven days' deliberation, Gunther answers that he will come. Hagen has loudly dissuaded the journey, but again been overruled. 'It is his fate,' says a commentator, 'like 'Cassandra's, ever to foresee the evil, and ever to be 'disregarded. He himself shut his ear against the 'inward voice; and now his warnings are uttered to 'the deaf.' He argues long, but in vain: nay, young Gernot hints at last that this aversion originates in personal fear:

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen: "Nowise is it through fear;
So you command it, Heroes, Then up, gird on your gear;
I ride with you the foremost Into King Etzel's land."
Since then full many a helm Was shivered by his hand.

Frau Ute's dreams and omens are now unavailing with him; "whoso heedeth dreams," said Hagen, "of the right story wotteth not:" he has computed the worst issue, and defied it.

Many a little touch of pathos, and even solemn beauty lies carelessly scattered in these rhymes, had we space to exhibit such here. As specimen of a strange, winding, diffuse, yet innocently graceful style of narrative, we had translated some considerable portion of this Twenty-fifth *Aventiure*, 'How the Nibelungen marched (fared) to the Huns,' into verses as literal as might be; which now, alas, look mournfully different from the original; almost like Scriblerus's shield when the barbarian housemaid had scoured it! Nevertheless, to do for the reader what we can, let somewhat of that

modernized ware, such as it is, be set before him. The brave Nibelungen are on the eve of departure; and about ferrying over the Rhine: and here it may be noted that Worms,* with our old Singer, lies not in its

---

* This City of Worms, had we a right imagination, ought to be as venerable to us Moderns, as any Thebes or Troy was to the Ancients. Whether founded by the Gods or not, it is of quite unknown antiquity, and has witnessed the most wonderful things. Within authentic times, the Romans were here, and if tradition may be credited, Attila also; it was the seat of the Austrasian kings; the frequent residence of Charlemagne himself; innumerable Festivals, High-tides, Tournaments, and Imperial Diets were held in it, of which latter, one at least, that where Luther appeared in 1521, will be for ever remembered by all mankind. Nor is Worms more famous in history than, as indeed we may see here, it is in romance; whereof many monuments and vestiges remain to *this day*. 'A pleasant meadow there,' says Von der Hagen, 'is still called Chriemhild's *Rosengarten*. The name '*Worms* itself is derived (by Legendary Etymology) from the 'Dragon, or *Worm*, which Siegfried slew, the figure of which once 'formed the City Arms; in past times, there was also to be seen 'here an ancient strong *Riesen-Haus* (Giant's house), and many 'a memorial of Siegfried: his Lance, 66 feet long (almost 80 Eng-'lish feet), in the Cathedral; his Statue, of gigantic size on the '*Neue Thurm* (New Tower) on the Rhine;' &c. &c. 'And lastly 'the Siegfried's Chapel, in primeval, Pre-Gothic architecture, not 'long since pulled down. In the time of the *Meistersängers*, too, 'the Stadtrath was bound to give every Master, who sang the Lay 'of Siegfried (*Meisterlied von Siegfrieden*, the purport of which is 'now unknown) without mistake, a certain gratuity.'—*Glossary to the Nibelungen*, § *Worms*.

One is sorry to learn that this famed Imperial City is no longer Imperial, but much fallen in every way from its palmy state; the 30,000 inhabitants, to be found there in Gustavus Adolphus' time, having now declined into some 6,800,—'who maintain

true position, but at some distance from the river; a proof at least that he was never there, and probably sang and lived in some very distant region:

The boats were floating ready, And many men there were;
What clothes of price they had They took and stow'd them there,
Was never a rest from toiling Until the even tide,
Then they took the flood right gaily, Would longer not abide.

Brave tents and hutches You saw raised on the grass,
Other side the Rhine-stream That camp it pitched was:
The king to stay a while Was besought of his fair wife;
That night she saw him with her, And never more in life.

Trumpets and flutes spoke out, At dawning of the day,
That time was come for parting, So they rose to march away:
Who loved-one had in arms Did kiss that same, I ween;
And fond farewells were bidden By cause of Etzel's Queen.

Frau Ute's noble sons They had a serving man,
A brave one and a true: Or ever the march began,
He speaketh to King Gunther, What for his ear was fit,
He said: "Wo for this journey, I grieve because of it."

He Rumold hight, the Sewer, Was known as hero true;
He spake: "Whom shall this people And land be trusted to?
Wo on't, will nought persuade ye, Brave Recken, from this road!
Frau Chriemhild's flattering message No good doth seem to bode."

' themselves by wine-growing, Rhine-boats, tobacco-manufacture, ' and making sugar-of-lead.' So hard has war, which respects nothing, pressed on Worms, ill-placed for safety, on the hostile border: Louvois, or Louis XIV., in 1689, had it utterly devastated; whereby in the interior, ' spaces that were once covered with buildings are now gardens.'—See *Conv. Lexicon*, § *Worms*.

"The land to thee be trusted, And my fair boy also,
And serve thou well the women, I tell thee ere I go,
Whomso thou findest weeping Her heart give comfort to;
No harm to one of us King Etzel's wife will do."

The steeds were standing ready, For the Kings and for their men;
With kisses tenderest, Took leave full many then,
Who, in gallant cheer and hope, To march were nought afraid:
Them since that day bewaileth Many a noble wife and maid.

But when the rapid Recken Took horse and prickt away,
The women shent in sorrow You saw behind them stay;
Of parting all too long Their hearts to them did tell;
When grief so great is coming, The mind forebodes not well.

Nathless the brisk Burgonden All on their way did go,
Then rose the country over A mickle dole and wo;
On both sides of the hills, Woman and man did weep:
Let their folk do how they list, These gay their course did keep.

The Nibelungen Recken* Did march with them as well,
In a thousand glittering hauberks, Who at home had ta'en farewell
Of many a fair woman Should see them never more:
The wound of her brave Siegfried Did grieve Chriemhilde sore.

---

* These are the Nibelungen proper who had come to Worms with Siegfried, on the famed bridal journey from Isenstein, long ago. Observe, at the same time, that ever since the *Nibelungen Hoard* was transferred to Rhine-land, the whole subjects of King Gunther are often called Nibelungen, and their subsequent history is this *Nibelungen Song*.

Then 'gan they shape their journey Towards the River Maine,
All on through East Franconia, King Gunther and his train;
Hagen he was their leader, Of old did know the way,
Dankwart did keep, as marshal, Their ranks in good array.

As they, from East-Franconia, The Salfield rode along,
Might you have seen them prancing, A bright and lordly throng,
The Princes and their vassals, All heroes of great fame:
The twelfth morn brave King Gunther Unto the Donau came.

There rode Von Troneg Hagen, The foremost of that host,
He was to the Nibelungen The guide they lov'd the most:
The Ritter keen dismounted, Set foot on the sandy ground,
His steed to a tree he tied, Look'd wistful all around.

"Much scaith," Von Troneg said, "May lightly chance to thee,
King Gunther, by this tide, As thou with eyes mayst see:
The river is overflowing, Full strong runs here its stream,
For crossing of this Donau Some counsel might well beseem."

"What counsel hast thou, brave Hagen," King Gunther then did say,
"Of thy own wit and cunning? Dishearten me not, I pray:
Thyself the ford wilt find us, If knightly skill it can,
That safe to yonder shore We may pass both horse and man."

"To me, I trow," spake Hagen, "Life hath not grown so cheap,
To go with will and drown me In riding these waters deep;
But first, of men some few By this hand of mine shall die,
In great King Etzel's country, As best good-will have I.

"But bide ye here by the River, Ye Ritters brisk and sound,
Myself will seek some boatman, If boatman here be found,

To row us at his ferry, Across to Gelfrat's land:"
The Troneger grasped his buckler, Fared forth along the strand.

He was full bravely harness'd, Himself he knightly bore,
With buckler and with helmet, Which bright enough he wore:
And, bound above his hauberk, A weapon broad was seen,
That cut with both its edges, Was never sword so keen.

Then hither he and thither Search'd for the Ferryman,
He heard a splashing of waters, To watch the same he 'gan,
It was the white Mer-women, That in a fountain clear,
To cool their fair bodyes, Were merrily bathing here.

From these Mer-women, who 'skimmed aloof like white cygnets,' at sight of him, Hagen snatches up 'their wondrous raiment;' on condition of returning which, they rede him his fortune; how this expedition is to speed. At first favourably:

She said: "To Etzel's country, Of a truth ye well may hie,
For here I pledge my hand, Now kill me if I lie;
That heroes seeking honour Did never arrive thereat
So richly as ye shall do, Believe thou surely that."

But no sooner is the wondrous raiment restored them, than they change their tale; for in spite of that matchless honour, it appears, every one of the adventurous Recken is to perish.

Outspake the wild Mer-woman: "I tell thee it will arrive,
Of all your gallant host No man shall be left alive,
Except King Gunther's chaplain, As we full well do know;
He only, home returning, To the Rhine-land back shall go."

Then spake Von Troneg Hagen, His wrath did fiercely swell:
"Such tidings to my master I were right loath to tell,

That in king Etzel's country We all must lose our life:
Yet shew me over the water, Thou wise all-knowing *wife*."

Thereupon, seeing him bent on ruin, she gives directions how to find the ferry, but withal counsels him to deal warily: the ferry-house stands on the other side of the river; the boatman, too, is not only the hottest-tempered of men, but rich and indolent; nevertheless, if nothing else will serve, let Hagen call himself Amelrich, and that name will bring him. All happens as predicted: the boatman, heedless of all shouting and offers of gold clasps, bestirs him lustily at the name of Amelrich; but the more indignant is he, on taking in his fare, to find it a counterfeit. He orders Hagen, if he loves his life, to leap out.

"Now say not that," spake Hagen; "Right hard am I bested,
Take from me for good friendship This clasp of gold so red;
And row our thousand heroes And steeds across this river:"
Then spake the wrathful boatman, "That will I surely never."

Then one of his oars he lifted, Right broad it was and long,
He struck it down on Hagen, Did the hero mickle wrong,
That in the boat he staggered, And alighted on his knee;
Other such wrathful boatman Did never the Troneger see.

His proud unbidden guest He would now provoke still more,
He struck his head so stoutly That it broke in twain the oar,
With strokes on head of Hagen; He was a sturdy wight:
Nathless had Gelfrat's boatman Small profit of that fight.

With fiercely raging spirit, the Troneger turn'd him round,
Clutch'd quick enough his scabbard, And a weapon there he found;

He smote his head from off him, And cast it on the sand,
Thus had that wrathful boatman His death from Hagen's hand.

Even as Von Troneg Hagen The wrathful boatman slew,
The boat whirl'd round to the river, He had work enough to do;
Or ever he turn'd it shorewards, To weary he began,
But kept full stoutly rowing, The bold king Gunther's man.

He wheel'd it back, brave Hagen, With many a lusty stroke,
The strong oar, with such rowing, In his hand asunder broke;
He fain would reach the Recken, All waiting on the shore,
No tackle now he had; Hei,* how deftly he spliced the oar,

With thong from off his buckler! It was a slender band;
Right over against a forest He drove the boat to land;
Where Gunther's Recken waited, In crowds along the beach;
Full many a goodly hero Moved down his boat to reach.

Hagen ferries them over himself 'into the unknown land,' like a right yare steersman; yet ever brooding fiercely on that prediction of the wild Mer-woman, which had outdone even his own dark forebodings. Seeing the Chaplain, who alone of them all was to return, standing in the boat beside his *chappelsoume* (pyxes

* These apparently insignificant circumstances, down even to mending the oar from his shield, are preserved with a singular fidelity, in the most distorted editions of the Tale: see, for example, the Danish ballad, *Lady Grimhild's Wrack* (translated in the *Northern Antiquities*, p. 275, by Mr. Jamieson). This '*Hei!*' is a brisk interjection, whereby the worthy old Singer now and then introduces his own person, when anything very eminent is going forward.

and other sacred furniture), he determines to belie at least this part of the prophecy, and on a sudden hurls the chaplain overboard. Nay, as the poor priest swims after the boat, he pushes him down, regardless of all remonstrance, resolved that he shall die. Nevertheless it proved not so: the chaplain made for the other side; when his strength failed, 'then God's hand helped him,' and at length he reached the shore. Thus does the stern truth stand revealed to Hagen, by the very means he took for eluding it: 'he thought with himself these Recken must all lose their lives.' From this time, a grim reckless spirit takes possession of him; a courage, an audacity, waxing more and more into the fixed strength of desperation. The passage once finished, he dashes the boat in pieces, and casts it in the stream, greatly as the others wonder at him.

"Why do ye this, good brother?" Said the Ritter Dankwart then,
"How shall we cross this river, When the road we come again?
Returning home from Hunland, Here must we lingering stay?"—
Not then did Hagen tell him That return no more could they.

In this shipment 'into the unknown land' there lies, for the more penetrating sort of commentators, some hidden meaning and allusion. The destruction of the unreturning Ship, as of the Ship Argo, of Æneas's Ships, and the like, is a constant feature of such traditions: it is thought, this ferrying of the Nibelungen has a reference to old Scandinavian Mythuses; nay, to the oldest, most universal emblems shaped out by man's Imagination; Hagen the ferryman being, in some sort,

a type of Death, who ferries over his thousands and tens of thousands into a Land still more unknown.*

But leaving these considerations, let us remark the deep fearful interest, which, in gathering strength, rises to a really tragical height in the close of this Poem. Strangely has the old Singer, in these his loose melodies, modulated the wild narrative into a poetic whole, with what we might call true art, were it not rather an instinct of genius still more unerring. A fateful gloom now hangs over the fortunes of the Nibelungen, which deepens and deepens as they march onwards to the judgment-bar, till all are engulphed in utter night.

Hagen himself rises in tragic greatness; so helpful, so prompt and strong is he, and true to the death, though without hope. If sin can ever be pardoned, then that one act of his is pardonable; by loyal faith, by free daring, and heroic constancy, he has made amends for it. Well does he know what is coming; yet he goes forth to meet it, offers to Ruin his sullen welcome. Warnings thicken on him, which he treats lightly, as things now superfluous. Spite of our love for Siegfried, we must pity and almost respect the lost Hagen, now in his extreme need, and fronting it so nobly. 'Mixed was his hair with a grey colour, his limbs strong, and threatening his look.' Nay, his sterner qualities are beautifully tempered by another feeling, of which till now we understood not that he was capable,—the feeling of friendship. There is a certain Volker of Alsace here introduced, not for the first time, yet first in decided energy, who is more to

* See Von der Hagen's *Nibelungen ihre Bedeutung*, &c.

Hagen than a brother. This Volker, a courtier and noble, is also a *Spielmann* (minstrel), a *Fidelere gut* (fiddler good); and surely the prince of all *Fideleres;* in truth a very phœnix, melodious as the soft nightingale, yet strong as the royal eagle: for also in the brunt of battle he can play tunes; and, with a *Steel Fiddlebow*, beats strange music from the cleft helmets of his enemies. There is, in this continual allusion to Volker's *Schwertfidelbogen* (Sword-fiddlebow), as rude as it sounds to us, a barbaric greatness and depth; the light minstrel of kingly and queenly halls is gay also in the storm of Fate, its dire rushing pipes and whistles to him: is he not the image of every brave man fighting with Necessity, be that duel when and where it may; smiting the fiend with giant strokes, yet every stroke *musical?* —This Volker and Hagen are united inseparably, and defy death together. 'Whatever Volker said pleased Hagen; whatever Hagen did pleased Volker.'

But into these last Ten *Aventiures*, almost like the image of a Doomsday, we must hardly glance at present. Seldom, perhaps, in the poetry of that or any other age, has a grander scene of pity and terror been exhibited than here, could we look into it clearly. At every new step new shapes of fear arise. Dietrich of Bern meets the Nibelungen on their way, with ominous warnings: but warnings, as we said, are now superfluous, when the evil itself is apparent and inevitable. Chriemhild, wasted and exasperated here into a frightful Medea, openly threatens Hagen, but is openly defied by him; he and Volker retire to a seat before her palace, and sit there, while she advances in angry tears, with a crowd of armed Huns to destroy them.

But Hagen has Siegfried's Balmung lying naked on his knee, the Minstrel also has drawn his keen Fiddlebow, and the Huns dare not provoke the battle. Chriemhild would fain single out Hagen for vengeance; but Hagen, like other men, stands not alone; and sin is an infection which will not rest with one victim. Partakers or not of his crime, the others also must share his punishment. Singularly touching, in the meanwhile, is king Etzel's ignorance of what every one else understands too well; and how, in peaceful hospitable spirit, he exerts himself to testify his joy over these royal guests of his, who are bidden hither for far other ends. That night the way-worn Nibelungen are sumptuously lodged; yet Hagen and Volker see good to keep watch: Volker plays them to sleep: 'under the door 'of the house he sat on the stone: bolder fiddler was 'there never any; when the tones flowed so sweetly 'they all gave him thanks. Then sounded his strings 'till all the house rang; his strength and the art were 'great; sweeter and sweeter he began to play, till flitted 'forth from him into sleep full many a care-worn soul.' It was their last lullaby; they were to sleep no more. Armed men appear, but suddenly vanish, in the night; assassins sent by Chriemhild, expecting no sentinel: it is plain that the last hour draws nigh.

In the morning the Nibelungen are for the Minster to hear mass; they are putting on gay raiment; but Hagen tells them a different tale: '"ye must take other 'garments, Recken; instead of silk shirts hauberks, for 'rich mantles your good shields: and, beloved masters, 'moreover squires and men, ye shall full earnestly go to 'the church, and plain to God the powerful (*Got dem*

'*richen*) of your sorrow and utmost need; and know of 'a surety that death for us is nigh." ' In Etzel's Hall, where the Nibelungen appear at the royal feast in complete armour, the Strife, incited by Chriemhild, begins; the first answer to her provocation is from Hagen, who hews off the head of her own and Etzel's son, making it bound into the mother's bosom: 'then began among the Recken a murder grim and great.' Dietrich, with a voice of preternatural power, commands pause; retires with Etzel and Chriemhild; and now the bloody work has free course. We have heard of battles, and massacres, and deadly struggles in siege and storm; but seldom has even the poet's imagination pictured anything so fierce and terrible as this. Host after host, as they enter that huge vaulted Hall, perish in conflict with the doomed Nibelungen; and ever after the terrific uproar, ensues a still more terrific silence. All night, and through morning it lasts. They throw the dead from the windows; blood runs like water; the Hall is set fire to, they quench it with blood, their own burning thirst they slake with blood. It is a tumult like the Crack of Doom, a thousand-voiced, wild-stunning hubbub; and, frightful like a Trump of Doom, the *Sword-fiddlebow* of Volker, who guards the door, makes music to that death-dance. Nor are traits of heroism wanting, and thrilling tones of pity and love; as in that act of Rudiger, Etzel's and Chriemhild's champion, who, bound by oath, 'lays his soul in God's hand,' and enters that Golgotha to die fighting against his friends; yet first changes shields with Hagen, whose own, also given him by Rudiger in a far other hour, had been shattered in the fight. 'When he so lovingly bade give him the

'shield, there were eyes enough red with hot tears; it 'was the last gift which Rudiger of Bechelaren gave to 'any Recke. As grim as Hagen was, and as hard of mind, 'he wept at this gift which the hero good, so near his 'last times, had given him; full many a noble Ritter 'began to weep.'

At last Volker is slain; they are all slain, save only Hagen and Gunther, faint and wounded, yet still unconquered among the bodies of the dead. Dietrich the wary, though strong and invincible, whose Recken too, except old Hildebrand, he now finds are all killed, though he had charged them strictly not to mix in the quarrel, at last arms himself to finish it. He subdues the two wearied Nibelungen, binds them, delivers them to Chriemhild; 'and Herr Dietrich went away with weeping eyes, worthily from the heroes.' These never saw each other more. Chriemhild demands of Hagen, Where the Nibelungen Hoard is? But he answers her, that he has sworn never to disclose it, while any of her brothers live. "I bring it to an end," said the infuriated woman; orders her brother's head to be struck off, and holds it up to Hagen. '"Thou hast 'it now according to thy will," said Hagen; "of the 'Hoard knoweth none but God and I; from thee, she-'devil (*valendinne*), shall it for ever be hid."' She kills him with his own sword, once her husband's; and is herself struck dead by Hildebrand, indignant at the wo she has wrought; king Etzel, there present, not opposing the deed. Whereupon the curtain drops over that wild scene: 'the full highly honoured were lying 'dead; the people all had sorrow and lamentation; in 'grief had the king's feast ended, as all love is wont to do:

Ine chan iu nicht bescheiden Waz sider da geschach,
Wan ritter unde wrovven Weinen man do sach,
Dar-zuo die edeln chnechte Ir lieben vriunde tot:
Da hat das mære ein ende; Diz ist der Nibelunge not.

I cannot say you now What hath befallen since,
The women all were weeping, And the Ritters and the prince,
Also the noble squires, Their dear friends lying dead:
Here hath the story ending; This is the *Nibelungen's Need.*

We have now finished our slight analysis of this Poem; and hope that readers, who are curious in this matter, and ask themselves, What is the *Nibelungen?* may have here found some outlines of an answer, some help towards farther researches of their own. To such readers another question will suggest itself: Whence this singular production comes to us, When and How it originated? On which point also, what little light our investigation has yielded may be summarily given.

The worthy Von der Hagen, who may well understand the *Nibelungen* better than any other man, having rendered it into the modern tongue, and twice edited it in the original, not without collating some eleven manuscripts, and travelling several thousands of miles to make the last edition perfect,—writes a Book some years ago, rather boldly denominated *The Nibelungen, its meaning for the present and for ever;* wherein, not content with any measurable antiquity of centuries, he would fain claim an antiquity beyond all bounds of dated time. Working his way with feeble mine-lamps of etymology and the like, he traces back the rudiments of his beloved *Nibelungen* 'to which the flower of his whole life has been consecrated,' into the thick dark-

ness of the Scandinavian *Niflheim* and *Muspelheim*, and the Hindoo Cosmogony; connecting it farther (as already in part we have incidentally pointed out) with the Ship Argo, with Jupiter's goatskin Ægis, the fire-creed of Zerdusht, and even with the heavenly Constellations. His reasoning is somewhat abstruse; yet an honest zeal, very considerable learning and intellectual force bring him tolerably through. So much he renders plausible or probable: that in the *Nibelungen*, under more or less defacement, lie fragments, scattered like mysterious Runes, yet still in part decipherable, of the earliest Thoughts of men; that the fiction of the Nibelungen was at first a religious or philosophical Mythus; and only in later ages, incorporating itself more or less completely with vague traditions of real events, took the form of a story, or mere Narrative of earthly transactions; in which last form, moreover, our actual *Nibelungen Lied* is nowise the original Narrative, but the second, or even the third redaction of one much earlier.

At what particular era the primeval fiction of the *Nibelungen* passed from its Mythological into its Historical shape; and the obscure spiritual elements of it wedded themselves to the obscure remembrances of the Norther Immigrations; and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac became Twelve Champions of Attila's Wife,—there is no fixing with the smallest certainty. It is known from history that Eginhart, the secretary of Charlemagne, compiled, by order of that monarch, a collection of the ancient German Songs; among which, it is fondly believed by antiquaries, this *Nibelungen* (not indeed our actual *Nibelungen Lied*, yet an older one of similar purport), and the main traditions of the

Heldenbuch connected therewith, may have had honourable place. Unluckily Eginhart's Collection has quite perished, and only his Life of the Great Charles, in which this circumstance stands noted, survives to provoke curiosity. One thing is certain, Fulco, Archbishop of Rheims, in the year 885, is introduced as 'citing certain German books,' to enforce some argument of his by instance of 'King Ermerich's crime toward his relations;' which King Ermerich and his crime are at this day part and parcel of the 'Cycle of German Fiction,' and presupposed in the *Nibelungen*.* Later notices, of a more decisive sort, occur in abundance. Saxo Grammaticus, who flourished in the twelfth century, relates that about the year 1130, a Saxon minstrel being sent to Seeland, with a treacherous invitation from one royal Dane to another; and not daring to violate his oath, yet compassionating the victim, sang to him by way of indirect warning 'the Song of Chriemhild's Treachery to her Brothers;' that is to say, the latter portion of the Story which we still read at greater length in the existing *Nibelungen Lied*. To which direct evidence, that these traditions were universally known in the twelfth century, nay had been in some shape committed to writing, as 'German Books,' in the ninth or rather in the eighth,—we have still to add the probability of their being 'ancient songs,' even at that earliest date; all which may perhaps carry us back into the seventh or even sixth century; yet not farther, inasmuch as certain of the poetic personages that figure in them belong historically to the fifth.

* Von der Hagen's *Nibelungen, Einleitung*, § vii.

Other and more open proof of antiquity lies in the fact, that these Traditions are so universally diffused. There are Danish and Icelandic versions of them, externally more or less altered and distorted, yet substantially real copies, professing indeed to be borrowed from the German; in particular we have the *Niflinga* and the *Wilkina Saga*, composed in the thirteenth century, which still in many ways illustrate the German original. Innumerable other songs and sagas point more remotely in the same direction. Nay, as Von der Hagen informs us, certain rhymed tales, founded on these old adventures, have been recovered from popular recitation, in the Faroe Islands, within these few years.

If we ask now, What lineaments of Fact still exist in these Traditions; what are the Historical events and persons which our primeval Mythuses have here united with, and so strangely metamorphosed? the answer is unsatisfactory enough. The great Northern Immigrations, unspeakably momentous and glorious as they were for the Germans, have well nigh faded away utterly from all vernacular records. Some traces, nevertheless, some names and dim shadows of occurrences in that grand movement, still linger here; which, in such circumstances, we gather with avidity. There can be no doubt, for example, but this 'Etzel, king of Hunland,' is the Attila of history; several of whose real achievements and relations are faintly yet still recognisably pictured forth in these Poems. Thus his first queen is named Halke, and in the Scandinavian versions, Herka; which last (Erca) is also the name that Priscus gives her, in the well-known Account of his Embassy to Attila. Moreover, it is on his second marriage, which had in fact so

mysterious and tragical a character, that the whole catastrophe of the *Nibelungen* turns. It is true, the 'Scourge of God' plays but a tame part here; however, his great acts, though all past, are still visible in their fruits: besides, it is on the Northern or German personages that the tradition chiefly dwells.

Taking farther into account the general 'Cycle,' or System of Northern Tradition, whereof this *Nibelungen* is the centre and key-stone, there is, as indeed we saw in the *Heldenbuch*, a certain Kaiser Ottnit and a Dietrich of Bern; to whom also it seems unreasonable to deny historical existence. This *Bern* (Verona), as well as the *Rabenschlacht* (Battle of Ravenna), is continually figuring in these fictions; though whether under Ottnit we are to understand Odoacer the vanquished, and under Dietrich of Bern Theodoricus Veronensis, the victor both at Verona and Ravenna, is by no means so indubitable. Chronological difficulties stand much in the way. For our Dietrich of Bern, as we saw in the *Nibelungen*, is represented as one of Etzel's Champions: now Attila died about the year 450; and this Ostrogoth Theodoric did not fight his great Battle at Verona till 489; that of Ravenna, which was followed by a three years' siege, happening next year. So that before Dietrich could become Dietrich *of Bern*, Etzel had been gone almost half a century from the scene. Startled by this anachronism, some commentators have fished out another Theodoric, eighty years prior to him of Verona, and who actually served in Attila's hosts, with a retinue of Goths and Germans; with which new Theodoric, however, the old Ottnit, or Odoacer, of the *Heldenbuch* must, in his turn, part company; whereby the case is no whit mended.

Certain it seems, in the mean time, that *Dietrich*, which signifies *Rich in People*, is the same name which in Greek becomes Theodoricus; for at first (as in Procopius) this very *Theodoricus* is always written Θευδεριχ, which almost exactly corresponds with the German sound. But such are the inconsistencies involved in both hypotheses, that we are forced to conclude one of two things: either that the Singers of those old Lays were little versed in the niceties of History, and unambitious of passing for authorities therein; which seems a remarkably easy conclusion: or else, with Lessing, that they meant some quite other series of persons and transactions, some Kaiser Otto, and his two Anti-Kaisers (in the twelfth century); which, from what has come to light since Lessing's day, seems now an untenable position.

However, as concerns the *Nibelungen*, the most remarkable coincidence, if genuine, remains yet to be mentioned. 'Thwortz,' a Hungarian Chronicler (or perhaps Chronicle), of we know not what authority, relates, 'that Attila left his kingdom to his two sons 'Chaba and Aladar, the former by a Grecian mother, the 'latter by Kremheilch (Chriemhild) a German; that 'Theodoric, one of his followers, sowed dissension be-'tween them; and, along with the Teutonic hosts, took 'part with his half-countryman, the younger son; where-'upon rose a great slaughter, which lasted for fifteen days, 'and terminated in the defeat of Chaba (the Greek), and 'his flight into Asia.'* Could we but put faith in this Thwortz, we might fancy that some vague rumour of

* Weber (*Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 39), who cites Görres (*Zeitung für Einsiedler*) as his authority.

that Kremheilch tragedy, swoln by the way, had reached the Gĕrman ear and imagination; where, gathering round older Ideas and Mythuses, as Matter round its Spirit, the first rude form of *Chriemhilde's Revenge and the Wreck of the Nibelungen* bodied itself forth in Song.

Thus any historical light emitted by these old Fictions is little better than darkness visible; sufficient at most to indicate that great Northern Immigrations, and wars and rumours of war have been; but nowise how and what they have been. Scarcely clearer is the special history of the Fictions themselves; where they were first put together, who have been their successive redactors and new-modellers. Von der Hagen, as we said, supposes that there may have been three several series of such. Two, at all events, are clearly indicated. In their present shape, we have internal evidence that none of these poems can be older than the twelfth century; indeed, great part of the *Hero-Book* can be proved to be considerably later. With this last it is understood that Wolfram von Eschenbach and Heinrich von Ofterdingen, two singers otherwise noted in that era, were largely concerned; but neither is there any demonstration of this vague belief: while again, in regard to the Author of our actual *Nibelungen* not so much as a plausible conjecture can be formed.

Some vote for a certain Conrad von Würzburg; others for the above-named Eschenbach and Ofterdingen; others again for Klingsohr of Ungerland, a minstrel who once passed for a magician. Against all and each of which hypotheses there are objections; and for none of them the smallest conclusive evidence. Who this gifted Singer may have been, only in so far as his Work itself

proves that there was but One, and the style points to the latter half of the twelfth century,—remains altogether dark: the unwearied Von der Hagen himself, after fullest investigation, gives for verdict, 'we know it not.' Considering the high worth of the *Nibelungen*, and how many feeble balladmongers of that *Swabian Era* have transmitted us their names, so total an oblivion, in this infinitely more important case, may seem surprising. But those *Minnelieder* (Love-songs) and Provençal Madrigals were the Court Poetry of that time, and gained honour in high places; while the old National Traditions were common property and plebeian, and to sing them an unrewarded labour.

Whoever he may be, let him have our gratitude, our love. Looking back with a farewell glance, over that wondrous old Tale, with its many-coloured texture 'of joyances and high-tides, of weeping and of wo,' so skilfully yet artlessly knit up into a whole, we cannot but repeat that a true epic spirit lives in it; that in many ways, it has meaning and charms for us. Not only as the oldest Tradition of Modern Europe, does it possess a high antiquarian interest; but farther, and even in the shape we now see it under, unless the 'Epics of the Son of Fingal' had some sort of authenticity, it is our oldest Poem also; the earliest product of these New Ages, which on its own merits, both in form and essence, can be named Poetical. Considering its chivalrous, romantic tone, it may rank as a piece of literary composition, perhaps considerably higher than the Spanish *Cid;* taking in its historical significance, and deep ramifications into the remote Time, it ranks indubitably and greatly higher.

It has been called a Northern *Iliad;* but except in the fact that both poems have a narrative character, and both sing 'the destructive rage' of men, the two have scarcely any similarity. The Singer of the *Nibelungen* is a far different person from Homer; far inferior both in culture, and in genius. Nothing of the glowing imagery, of the fierce bursting energy, of the mingled fire and gloom, that dwell in the old Greek, makes its appearance here. The German Singer is comparatively a simple nature; has never penetrated deep into life; never 'questioned Fate,' or struggled with fearful mysteries; of all which we find traces in Homer, still more in Shakspeare; but with meek believing submission, has taken the Universe as he found it represented to him; and rejoices with a fine childlike gladness in the mere outward shows of things. He has little power of delineating character; perhaps he had no decisive vision thereof. His persons are superficially distinguished, and not altogether without generic difference; but the portraiture is imperfectly brought out; there lay no true living original within him. He has little Fancy; we find scarcely one or two similitudes in his whole Poem; and these one or two, which moreover are repeated, betoken no special faculty that way. He speaks of the 'moon among stars;' says often, of sparks struck from steel armour in battle, and so forth, that they were *wie es wehte der wind,* 'as if the wind were blowing them.' We have mentioned Tasso along with him; yet neither in this case is there any close resemblance; the light playful grace, still more, the Italian pomp and sunny luxuriance of Tasso are wanting in the other. His are humble wood-notes wild; no nightingale's, but yet a

sweet sky-hidden lark's. In all the rhetorical gifts, to say nothing of rhetorical attainments, we should pronounce him even poor.

Nevertheless, a noble soul he must have been, and furnished with far more essential requisites for Poetry, than these are; namely, with the heart and feeling of a Poet. He has a clear eye for the Beautiful and True; all unites itself gracefully and compactly in his imagination: it is strange with what careless felicity he winds his way in that complex Narrative, and be the subject what it will, comes through it unsullied, and with a smile. His great strength is an unconscious instinctive strength; wherein truly lies its highest merit. The whole spirit of Chivalry, of Love, and heroic Valour, must have lived in him, and inspired him. Everywhere he shews a noble Sensibility; the sad accents of parting friends, the lamentings of women, the high daring of men, all that is worthy and lovely prolongs itself in melodious echoes through his heart. A true old Singer, and taught of Nature herself! Neither let us call him an inglorious Milton, since now he is no longer a mute one. What good were it that the four or five Letters composing his Name could be printed, and pronounced, with absolute certainty? All that was mortal in him is gone utterly; of his life, and its environment, as of the bodily tabernacle he dwelt in, the very ashes remain not: like a fair heavenly Apparition, which indeed he *was*, he has melted into air, and only the Voice he uttered, in virtue of its inspired gift, yet lives and will live.

To the Germans this *Nibelungen Song* is naturally an object of no common love; neither if they sometimes

overvalue it, and vague antiquarian wonder is more common than just criticism, should the fault be too heavily visited. After long ages of concealment, they have found it in the remote wilderness, still standing like the trunk of some almost antediluvian oak; nay with boughs on it still green, after all the wind and weather of twelve hundred years. To many a patriotic feeling, which lingers fondly in solitary places of the Past, it may well be a rallying-point, and 'Lovers' *Trysting-tree.*'

For us also it has its worth. A creation from the old ages, still bright and balmy, if we visit it; and opening into the first History of Europe, of Mankind. Thus all is not oblivion; but on the edge of the abyss, that separates the Old world from the New, there hangs a fair Rainbow-land; which also, in curious repetitions of itself (*twice* over, say the critics), as it were in a secondary and even a ternary reflex, sheds some feeble twilight far into the deeps of the primeval Time.

GERMAN LITERATURE OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES.*

[1831.]

It is not with Herr Soltau's work, and its merits or demerits, that we here purpose to concern ourselves. The old Low-German Apologue was already familiar under many shapes; in versions into Latin, English, and all modern tongues: if it now comes before our German friends under a new shape, and they can read it not only in Gottsched's prosaic Prose, and Goethe's poetic Hexameters, but also 'in the metre of the original,' namely, in Doggerel; and this, as would appear, not without comfort, for it is 'the second edition;'—doubtless the Germans themselves will look to it, will direct Herr Soltau aright in his praiseworthy labours, and, with all suitable speed, forward him from his second edition into a third. To us strangers the fact is chiefly interesting, as another little memento of the indestructible vitality there is in worth, however rude; and to stranger Reviewers, as it brings that wondrous old Fiction, with so much else that holds of it, once more specifically into view.

The Apologue of *Reynard the Fox* ranks undoubtedly

---

* Foreign Quarterly Review, No. 16.—*Reinecke der Fuchs, übersetzt von D. W. Soltau.* (Reynard the Fox, translated by D. W. Soltau.) 2d edition. 8vo. Lüneburg, 1830.

among the most remarkable Books, not only as a German, but, in all senses, as a European one; and yet for us perhaps its extrinsic, historical character is even more noteworthy than its intrinsic. In Literary History it forms, so to speak, the culminating point, or highest manifestation of a Tendency which had ruled the two prior centuries: ever downwards from the last of the Hohenstauffen Emperors, and the end of their Swabian Era, to the borders of the Reformation, rudiments and fibres of this singular Fable are seen, among innumerable kindred things, fashioning themselves together; and now, after three other centuries of actual existence, it still stands visible and entire, venerable in itself, and the enduring memorial of much that has proved more perishable. Thus, naturally enough, it figures as the representative of a whole group that historically cluster round it; in studying its insignificance, we study that of a whole intellectual period.

As this section of German Literature closely connects itself with the corresponding section of European Literature, and indeed offers an expressive, characteristic epitome thereof, some insight into it, were such easily procurable, might not be without profit. No Literary Historian that we know of, least of all any in England, having looked much in this direction, either as concerned Germany or other countries, whereby a long space of time, once busy enough, and full of life, now lies barren and void in men's memories,—we shall here endeavour to present, in such clearness as first attempts may admit, the result of some slight researches of our own in regard to it.

The *Troubadour Period* in general Literature, to

which the *Swabian Era* in German answers, has, especially within the last generation, attracted inquiry enough; the French have their Raynouards, we our Webers, the Germans their Haugs, Gräters, Langs, and numerous other Collectors and Translators of *Minnelieder;* among whom Ludwig Tieck, the foremost in far other provinces, has not disdained to take the lead. We shall suppose that this Literary Period is partially known to all readers. Let each recall whatever he has learned or figured regarding it; represent to himself that brave young heyday of Chivalry and Minstrelsy, when a stern Barbarossa, a stern Lion-heart, sang *sirventes*, and with the hand that could wield the sword and sceptre twanged the melodious strings; when knights-errant tilted, and ladies' eyes rained bright influences; and suddenly, as at sunrise, the whole Earth had grown vocal and musical. Then truly was the time of singing come; for princes and prelates, emperors and squires, the wise and the simple, men, women, and children, all sang and rhymed, or delighted in hearing it done. It was a universal noise of Song; as if the Spring of Manhood had arrived, and warblings from every spray, not indeed without infinite twitterings also, which, except their gladness, had no music, were bidding it welcome. This was the *Swabian Era;* justly reckoned not only superior to all preceding eras, but properly the First Era of German Literature. Poetry had at length found a home in the life of men; and every pure soul was inspired by it; and in words, or still better, in actions, strove to give it utterance. 'Believers,' says Tieck, 'sang of Faith; Lovers of Love; Knights de-'scribed knightly actions and battles; and loving, be-

'lieving knights were their chief audience. The Spring, 'Beauty, Gayety, were objects that could never tire; great duels and deeds of arms carried away every hearer, the more surely the stronger they were painted; and as the pillars and dome of the Church encircled 'the flock, so did Religion, as the Highest, encircle 'Poetry and Reality; and every heart, in equal love, 'humbled itself before her.'*

Let the reader, we say, fancy all this, and moreover that, as earthly things do, it is all passing away. And now, from this extreme verge of the *Swabian Era*, let us look forward into the inane of the next two centuries, and see whether there also some shadows and dim forms, significant in their kind, may not begin to grow visible. Already, as above indicated, *Reinecke de Fos* rises clear in the distance, as the goal of our survey: let us now, restricting ourselves to the German aspects of the matter, examine what may lie between.

Conrad the Fourth, who died in 1254, was the last of the Swabian Emperors; and Conradin his son, grasping too early at a Southern Crown, perished on the scaffold at Naples in 1268; with which stripling, more fortunate in song than in war, and whose death, or murder, with fourteen years of other cruelty, the *Sicilian Vespers* so frightfully avenged, the imperial line of the Hohenstauffen came to an end. Their House, as we have seen, gives name to a Literary Era; and truly, if dates alone were regarded, we might reckon it much more than a name. For with this change of

* *Minnelieder aus dem Schwäbischen Zeitalter.* (*Vorrede*, x.)

dynasty, a great change in German Literature begins to indicate itself; the fall of the Hohenstauffen is close followed by the decay of Poetry; as if that fair flowerage and umbrage, which blossomed far and wide round the Swabian Family, had in very deed depended on it for growth and life; and now, the stem being felled, the leaves also were languishing, and soon to wither and drop away. Conradin, as his father and his grandfather had been, was a singer; some lines of his, though he died in his sixteenth year, have even come down to us; but henceforth no crowned poet, except, long afterwards, some few with cheap laurel-crowns, is to be met with: the Gay Science was visibly declining. In such times as now came, the court and the great could no longer patronize it; the polity of the Empire was, by one convulsion after another, all but utterly dismembered; ambitious nobles, a sovereign without power; contention, violence, distress, every where prevailing. Richard of Cornwall, who could not so much as keep hold of his sceptre, not to speak of swaying it wisely; or even the brave Rudolf of Hapsburg, who manfully accomplished both these duties, had other work to do than sweet singing. Gay *Wars of the Wartburg* were now changed to stern *Battles of the Marchfeld;* in his leisure hours a good Emperor, instead of twanging harps, must hammer from his helmet the dints it had got in his working and fighting hours.* Amid such rude tumults the Minne-Song could not but change its

* It was on this famous plain of the Marchfeld that Ottocar, King of Bohemia, conquered Bela of Hungary, in 1260; and was himself, in 1278, conquered and slain by Rudolf of Hapsburg, at that time much left to his own resources; whose talent for mend-

scene and tone: if, indeed, it continued at all, which, however, it scarcely did; for now, no longer united in courtly choir, it seemed to lose both its sweetness and its force, gradually became mute, or in remote obscure corners lived on, feeble and inaudible, till after several centuries, when under a new title, and with far inferior claims, it again solicits some notice from us.

Doubtless, in this posture of affairs political, the progress of Literature could be little forwarded from without; in some directions, as in that of Court-Poetry, we may admit that it was obstructed or altogether stopped. But why not only Court-Poetry, but Poetry of all sorts should have declined, and as it were gone out, is quite another question; to which, indeed, as men must have their theory on everything, answer has often been attempted, but only with partial success. To most of the German Literary Historians this so ungenial condition of the Court and Government appears enough: by the warlike, altogether practical character of Rudolf, by the imbecile ambition of his successors, by the general prevalence of feuds and lawless disorder, the death of Poetry seems fully accounted for. In which conclusion of theirs, allowing all force to the grounds it rests on, we cannot but perceive that there lurks some fallacy: the fallacy namely, so common in these times, of deducing the inward and spiritual exclusively from the outward

---

ing helmets, however, is perhaps but a poetical tradition. Curious, moreover: it was here again, after more than five centuries, that the House of Hapsburg received its worst overthrow, and from a new and greater Rudolf, namely, from Napoleon, at Wagram, which lies in the middle of this same Marchfeld.

and material; of tacitly, perhaps unconsciously, denying all independent force, or even life, to the former, and looking out for the secret of its vicissitudes solely in some circumstance belonging to the latter. Now it cannot be too often repeated, where it continues still unknown or forgotten, that man has a soul as certainly as he has a body; nay, much more certainly; that properly it is the course of his unseen, spiritual life, which informs and rules his external visible life, rather than receives rule from it; in which spiritual life, indeed, and not in any outward action or condition arising from it, the true secret of his history lies, and is to be sought after, and indefinitely approached. Poetry above all, we should have known long ago, is one of those mysterious things whose origin and developments never can be what we call explained; often it seems to us like the wind, blowing where it lists, coming and departing with little or no regard to any the most cunning theory that has yet been devised of it. Least of all does it seem to depend on court patronage, the form of government, or any modification of politics or economics, catholic as these influences have now become in our philosophy: it lives in a snow-clad sulphurous Iceland, and not in a sunny wine-growing France; flourishes under an arbitrary Elizabeth, and dies out under a constitutional George; Philip II. has his Cervantes, and in prison; Washington and Jackson have only their Coopers and Browns. Why did Poetry appear so brightly after the Battles of Thermopylæ and Salamis, and quite turn away her face and wings from those of Lexington and Bunker's Hill? We answer, the Greeks were a poetical people, the Americans are not; that is to say, it appeared because it did ap-

pear! On the whole, we could desire that one of two things should happen: Either that our theories and genetic histories of Poetry should henceforth cease, and mankind rest satisfied, once for all, with Dr. Cabanis' theory, which seems to be the simplest, that 'Poetry is a product of the smaller intestines,' and must be cultivated medically by the exhibition of castor-oil: Or else that, in future speculations of this kind, we should endeavour to start with some recognition of the fact, once well known, and still in words admitted, that Poetry is Inspiration; has in it a certain spirituality and divinity which no dissecting-knife will discover; arises in the most secret and most sacred region of man's soul, as it were in our Holy of Holies; and as for external things, depends only on such as can operate in that region; among which it will be found that Acts of Parliament, and the state of the Smithfield Markets, nowise play the chief part.

With regard to this change in German Literature, especially, it is to be remarked, that the phenomenon was not a German, but a European one; whereby we easily infer so much at least, that the roots of it must have lain deeper than in any change from Hohenstauffen Emperors to Hapsburg ones. For now the Troubadours and Trouvères, as well as the Minnesingers, were sinking into silence; the world seems to have rhymed itself out; those chivalrous roundelays, heroic tales, mythologies, and quaint love-sicknesses, had grown unprofitable to the ear. In fact, Chivalry itself was in the wane; and with it that gay melody, like its other pomp. More earnest business, not sportfully, but with harsh endeavour, was now to be done. The graceful minuet-dance of Fancy

must give place to the toilsome, thorny pilgrimage of Understanding. Life and its appurtenances and possessions, which had been so admired and besung, now disclosed, the more they came to be investigated, the more contradictions. The Church no longer rose with its pillars, 'like a venerable dome over the united flock;' but, more accurately seen into, was a strait prison, full of unclean creeping things; against which thraldom all better spirits could not but murmur and struggle. Everywhere greatness and littleness seemed so inexplicably blended: Nature, like the Sphinx, her emblem, with her fair woman's face and neck, shewed also the claws of a lioness. Now too her Riddle had been propounded; and thousands of subtle, disputatious School-men were striving earnestly to read it, that they might live, morally live, that the monster might not devour them. These, like strong swimmers, in boundless, bottomless vortices of Logic, swam manfully, but could not get to land.

On a better course, yet with the like aim, Physical Science was also unfolding itself. A Roger Bacon, an Albert the Great, are cheering appearances in this era; not blind to the greatness of Nature, yet no longer with poetic reverence of her, but venturing fearlessly into her recesses, and extorting from her many a secret; the first victories of that long series which is to make man more and more her King. Thus everywhere we have the image of contest, of effort. The spirit of man, which once, in peaceful, loving communion with the Universe, had uttered forth its gladness in Song, now feels hampered and hemmed in, and struggles vehemently to make itself room. Power is the one thing needful, and that Knowledge which is Power: thus also Intellect becomes

the grand faculty, in which all the others are well nigh absorbed.

Poetry, which has been defined as 'the harmonious unison of Man with Nature,' could not flourish in this temper of the times. The number of poets, or rather versifiers, henceforth greatly diminishes; their style also, and topics, are different and less poetical. Men wish to be practically instructed rather than poetically amused: Poetry itself must assume a preceptorial character, and teach wholesome saws and moral maxims, or it will not be listened to. Singing for the song's sake is now nowhere practised; but in its stead there is everywhere the jar and bustle of argument, investigation, contentious activity. Such throughout the fourteenth century is the general aspect of mind over Europe. In Italy alone is there a splendid exception; the mystic song of Dante, with its stern indignant moral, is followed by the light love-rhymes of Petrarch, the Troubadour of Italy, when this class was extinct elsewhere: the master minds of that country, peculiar in its social and moral condition, still more in its relations to classical Antiquity, pursue a course of their own. But only the master minds; for Italy too has its Dialecticians, and projectors, and reformers; nay, after Petrarch, these take the lead; and there as elsewhere, in their discords and loud assiduous toil, the voice of Poetry dies away.

To search out the causes of this great revolution, which lie not in Politics nor Statistics, would lead us far beyond our depth. Meanwhile let us remark that the change is nowise to be considered as a relapse, or fall from a higher state of spiritual culture to a lower; but rather, so far as we have objects to compare it with, as a

quite natural progress and higher development of culture. In the history of the universal mind, there is a certain analogy to that of the individual. Our first self-consciousness is the first revelation to us of a whole universe, wondrous and altogether good; it is a feeling of joy and new-found strength, of mysterious infinite hope and capability; and in all men, either by word or act, expresses itself poetically. The world without us and within us, beshone by the young light of Love, and all instinct with a divinity, is beautiful and great; it seems for us a boundless happiness that we are privileged to live. This is the season of generous deeds and feelings; which also, on the lips of the gifted, form themselves into musical utterance, and give spoken poetry as well as acted. Nothing is calculated and measured, but all is loved, believed, appropriated. All action is spontaneous, high sentiment a sure, imperishable good; and thus the youth stands, like the First Man, in his fair Garden, giving Names to the bright Appearances of this Universe which he has inherited, and rejoicing in it as glorious and divine. Ere long, however, comes a harsher time. Under the first beauty of man's life appears an infinite, earnest rigour: high sentiment will not avail, unless it can continue to be translated into noble action; which problem, in the destiny appointed for man born to toil, is difficult, interminable, capable of only approximate solution. What flowed softly in melodious coherence when seen and sung from a distance, proves rugged and unmanageable when practically handled. The fervid, lyrical gladness of past years gives place to a collected thoughtfulness and energy; nay often,—so painful, so unexpected are the contradictions everywhere met

with,—to gloom, sadness, and anger; and not till after long struggles and hard-contested victories is the youth changed into a man.

Without pushing the comparison too far, we may say that in the culture of the European mind, or in Literature which is the symbol and product of this, a certain similarity of progress is manifested. That tuneful Chivalry, that high cheerful devotion to the Gödlike in heaven, and to Women, its emblems on earth; those Crusades and vernal Love-songs were the heroic doings of the world's youth; to which also a corresponding manhood succeeded. Poetic recognition is followed by scientific examination: the reign of Fancy, with its gay images, and graceful, capricious sports, has ended; and now Understanding, which when re-united to Poetry, will one day become Reason and a nobler Poetry, has to do its part. Meantime, while there is no such union but a more and more widening controversy, prosaic discord and the unmusical sounds of labour and effort are alone audible.

The era of the Troubadours, who in Germany are the Minnesingers, gave place in that country, as in all others, to a period which we might name the Didactic; for Literature now ceased to be a festal melody, and addressing itself rather to the intellect than to the heart, became as it were a school lesson. Instead of that cheerful, warbling Song of Love and Devotion, wherein nothing was taught, but all was believed and worshipped, we have henceforth only wise Apologues, Fables, Satires, Exhortations, and all manner of edifying Moralities. Poetry, indeed, continued still to be the form of composition for all that can be named Literature; except

Chroniclers, and others of that genus, valuable not a doers of the work, but as witnesses of the work done, these Teachers all wrote in verse: nevertheless, in general there are few elements of Poetry in their performances; the internal structure has nothing poetical, is a mere business-like prose: in the rhyme alone, at most in the occasional graces of expression, could we discover that it reckoned itself poetical. In fact, we may say that Poetry, in the old sense, had now altogether gone out of sight: instead of her heavenly vesture and Ariel-harp, she had put on earthly weeds, and walked abroad with ferula and horn-book. It was long before this new guise would sit well on her; only in late centuries that she could fashion it into beauty, and learn to move with it, and mount with it, gracefully as of old.

Looking now more specially to our historical task, if we inquire how far into the subsequent time this Didactic Period extended, no precise answer can well be given. On this side there seem no positive limits to it; with many superficial modifications, the same fundamental element pervades all spiritual efforts of mankind through the following centuries. We may say that it is felt even in the Poetry of our own time; nay, must be felt through all time; inasmuch as Inquiry once awakened cannot fall asleep, or exhaust itself; thus Literature must continue to have a didactic character; and the Poet of these days is he who, not indeed by mechanical but by poetical methods, can instruct us, can more and more evolve for us the mystery of our Life. However, after a certain space, this Didactic Spirit in Literature cannot, as a historical partition and landmark, be available here. At the era of the Reformation, it reaches its acme; and,

in singular shape, steps forth on the high places of Public Business, and amid storms and thunder, not without brightness and true fire from Heaven, convulsively renovates the world. This is, as it were, the apotheosis of the Didactic Spirit, where it first attains a really poetical concentration, and stimulates mankind into heroism of word and of action also. Of the latter, indeed, still more than of the former; for not till a much more recent time, almost till our own time, has Inquiry in some measure again reconciled itself to Belief; and Poetry, though in detached tones, arisen on us, as a true musical Wisdom. Thus is the deed, in certain circumstances, readier and greater than the word: Action strikes fiery light from the rocks it has to hew through; Poetry reposes in the skyey splendour which that rough passage has led to. But after Luther's day, this Didactic Tendency again sinks to a lower level; mingles with manifold other tendencies; among which, admitting that it still forms the main stream, it is no longer so pre-eminent, positive, and universal, as properly to characterise the whole. For minor Periods and subdivisions in Literary History, other more superficial characteristics must, from time to time, be fixed on.

Neither, examining the other limit of this Period, can we say specially where it begins; for, as usual in these things, it begins not at once, but by degrees: Kings' reigns and changes in the form of Government have their day and date; not so changes in the spiritual condition of a people. The Minnesinger Period and the Didactic may be said to commingle, as it were, to overlap each other, for above a century: some writers partially belonging to the latter class occur even prior to the times of

Friedrich II.; and a certain echo of the Minne-song had continued down to Manesse's day, under Ludwig the Bavarian.

Thus from the Minnesingers to the Church Reformers, we have a wide space of between two and three centuries; in which, of course, it is impossible for us to do more than point out one or two of the leading appearances; a minute survey and exposition being foreign from our object.

Among the Minnesingers themselves, as already hinted, there are not wanting some with an occasionally didactic character: Gottfried of Strasburg, known also as a translator of *Sir Tristrem*, and two other Singers, Reinmar von Zweter, and Walter von der Vogelweide, are noted in this respect; the last two especially, for their oblique glances at the Pope and his Monks, the unsound condition of which body could not escape even a Love-minstrel's eye.* But perhaps the special step of

---

* Reinmar von Zweter, for example, says once:

Har und bart nach Klostersitten gesnitten
Des vind ich gennog,
Ich vinde aber der nit vil dies rehte tragen;
Halb visch halb man ist visch noch man,
Gar visch ist visch, gar man ist man,
Als ich erkennen kan:
Von hofmunchen und von Klosterrittern
Kan ich niht gesagen:
Hofmunchen, Klosterrittern, diesen beiden
Wolt ich reht ze rehte wol bescheiden,
Ob sie sich wolten lassen vinden,
Da sie ze rehte solten wesen;
In Kloster munche solten genesen,
So suln des hofs sich ritter unterwinden.

transition may be still better marked in the works of a rhymer named the *Stricker*, whose province was the epic, or narrative; into which he seems to have introduced this new character in unusual measure. As the *Stricker* still retains some shadow of a place in Literary History, the following notice of him may be borrowed here. Of his personal history, it may be premised, nothing whatever is known; not even why he bears this title; unless it be, as some have fancied, that *Stricker*, which now signifies *Knitter*, in those days meant *Schreiber* (Writer):

'In truth,' says Bouterwek, 'this pains-taking man was

Hair and beard cut in the cloister fashion
Of this find I enough,
But of those that wear it well I find not many;
Half-fish half-man is neither fish nor man,
Whole fish is fish, whole man is man,
As I discover can:
Of court-monks and of cloister-knights
Can I not speak:
Court-monks, cloister-knights, these both
Would I rightly put to rights,
Whether they would let themselves be found
Where they by right should be;
In their cloister monks should flourish,
And knights obey at court.

See also in *Flögel* (*Geschichte der Komischen Litteratur*, b. iii. s. 11), immediately following this Extract, a formidable dinner-course of *Lies*,—boiled lies, roasted lies, lies with saffron, forced-meat lies, and other varieties, arranged by this same artist;—farther (in page 9), a rather gallant onslaught from Walter von der Vogelweide, on the *Babest* (Pope, *Papst*) himself. All this was before the middle of the thirteenth century.

more a writer than a Poet, yet not altogether without talent in that latter way. Voluminous enough, at least, is his redaction of an older epic work on the *War of Charlemagne with the Saracens in Spain*, the old German original of which is perhaps nothing more than a translation from the Latin or French. Of a Poet in the Stricker's day, when the romantic epos had attained such polish among the Germans, one might have expected that this ancient Fiction, since he was pleased to remodel it, would have served as the material to a new poetic creation; or at least, that he would have breathed into it some new and more poetic spirit. But such a development of these Charlemagne Fables was reserved for the *Italian* Poets. The Stricker has not only left the matter of the old Tale almost unaltered, but has even brought out its unpoetical lineaments in stronger light. The fanatical piety with which it is overloaded probably appeared to him its chief merit. To convert these castaway Heathens, or failing this, to annihilate them, Charlemagne takes the field. Next to him, the hero Roland plays a main part there. Consultations are held, ambassadors negotiate; war breaks out with all its terrors: the Heathen fight stoutly: at length comes the well-known defeat of the Franks at Ronceval, or Roncevaux; where, however, the Saracens also lose so many men, that their King Marsilies dies of grief. The Narrative is divided into chapters, each chapter again into sections, an epitome of which is always given at the outset. Miracles occur in the story, but for most part only such as tend to evince how God himself inspirited the Christians against the Heathen. Of anything like free, bold flights of imagination there is little to be met with: the higher features of the genuine romantic epos are altogether wanting. In return, it has a certain didactic temper, which, indeed, announces itself even in the Introduction. The latter, it should be added, prepossesses us in the Poet's favour: testifying with

what warm interest the noble and great in man's life affected him.' *

The *Wälsche Gast* (Italian Guest) of Zirkler, or Tirkeler, who professes, truly or not, to be from Friuli, and, as a benevolent stranger, or *Guest*, tells the Germans hard truths somewhat in the spirit of Juvenal; even the famous *Meister Freidank* (Master Freethought) with his wise Book of rhymed Maxims, entitled *Die Bescheidenheit* (Modesty); still more the sagacious *Tyro, King of Scots*, quite omitted in history, but who teaches *Friedebrand, his Son*, with some discrimination, how to choose a good priest;—all these, with others of still thinner substance, rise before us only as faint shadows, and must not linger in our field of vision. Greatly the most important figure in the earlier part of this era is Hugo von Trimberg, to whom we must now turn; author of various poetico-preceptorial works, one of which, named the *Renner* (Runner), has long been known not only to antiquarians, but, in some small degree, even to the general reader. Of Hugo's Biography he has himself incidentally communicated somewhat. His surname he derives from Trimberg, his birth-place, a village on the Saale, not far from Würzburg, in Franconia. By profession he appears to have been a Schoolmaster: in the conclusion of his *Renner*, he announces

* Bouterwek, ix. 245. Other versified Narratives by this worthy *Stricker*, still exist, but for the most part only in manuscript. Of these the History of *Wilhelm von Blumethal*, a Round-table adventurer, appears to be the principal. The Poem on Charlemagne stands printed in Schilter's *Thesaurus*; its exact date is matter only of conjecture.

-that 'he kept school for forty years at Thürstadt, near Bamberg;' farther, that his Book was finished in 1300, which date he confirms by other local circumstances.

Der dies Buch gedichtet hat,
Der pflag der schulen zu Thürstat.
Vierzig jar vor Babenberg,
Und hiess Hugo von Trymberg.
Es ward follenbracht das ist wahr,
Da tausent und dreyhundert jar
Nach Christus Geburt vergangen waren,
Drithalbs jar gleich vor den jaren
Da die Juden in Franken wurden erschlagen.
Bey der zeit und in den tagen,
Da bischoff Leupolt bischoff was
Zu Babenberg.

Some have supposed that the Schoolmaster dignity, claimed here, refers not to actual wielding of the birch, but to a Mastership and practice of instructing in the art of Poetry, which about this time began to have its scholars and even guild-brethren, as the feeble remnants of Minne-song gradually took the new shape, in which we afterwards see it, of *Meister-gesang* (Master-song): but for this hypothesis, so plain are Hugo's own words, there seems little foundation. It is uncertain whether he was a clerical personage, certain enough that he was not a monk: at all events, he must have been a man of reading and knowledge; industrious in study, and superior in literary acquirement to most in that time. By a collateral account, we find that he had gathered a library of two hundred Books, among which were a whole dozen by himself, five in Latin, seven in German; hoping that by means of these, and the fur-

therance they would yield in the pedagogic craft, he might live at ease in his old days; in which hope, however, he had been disappointed; seeing, as himself rather feelingly complains, 'no one now cares to study 'knowledge (*Kunst*), which, nevertheless, deserves ho-'nour and favour.' What these twelve Books of Hugo's own writing were, can, for most part, only be conjectured. Of one, entitled the *Sammler* (Collector), he himself makes mention in the *Renner:* he had begun it above thirty years before this latter: but having by ill accident lost great part of his manuscript, abandoned it in anger. Of another work Flögel has discovered the following notice in Johann Wolf: 'About this time '(1599) did that virtuous and learned nobleman, Conrad 'von Liebenstein, present to me a manuscript of Hugo 'von Trimberg, who flourished about the year 1300. 'It sets forth the shortcomings of all ranks, and espe-'cially complains of the clergy. It is entitled *Reu ins 'Land* (Repentance to the Land); and now lies with 'the Lord of Zillhart.'* The other ten appear to have vanished even to the last vestige.

Such is the whole sum-total of information which the assiduity of commentators has collected touching worthy Hugo's life and fortunes. Pleasant it were to see him face to face; gladly would we penetrate through that long vista of five hundred years, and peep into his book-presses, his frugal fireside, his noisy mansion with its disobedient urchins, now that it is all grown so silent: but the distance is too far, the intervening

* Flögel, (iii. 15) who quotes for it, *Wolfii Lexicon Memorab.*, t. ii. p. 1061.

medium intercepts our light; only in uncertain, fluctuating dusk, will Hugo and his environment appear to us. Nevertheless Hugo, as he had in Nature, has in History, an immortal part: as to his inward man, we can still see that he was no mere bookworm, or simple Parson Adams; but of most observant eye; shrewd, inquiring, considerate, who from his Thürstadt schoolchair, as from a *sedes exploratoria*, had looked abroad into the world's business, and formed his own theory about many things. A cheerful, gentle heart had been given him; a quiet, sly humour; light to see beyond the garments and outer hulls of Life into Life itself: the long-necked purse, the threadbare gabardine, the languidly-simmering pot of his pedagogic household establishment were a small matter to him: he was a man to look on these things with a meek smile; to nestle down quietly, as the lark, in the lowest furrow; nay to mount therefrom singing, and soar above all mere earthly heights. How many potentates, and principalities, and proud belligerents have evaporated into utter oblivion, while the poor Thürstadt Schoolmaster still holds together!

This *Renner*, which seems to be his final work, probably comprises the essence of all those lost Volumes; and indeed a synopsis of Hugo's whole Philosophy of Life, such as his two hundred Books and long decades of quiet observation and reflection had taught him. Why it has been named the *Renner*, whether by Hugo himself, or by some witty Editor and Transcriber, there are two guesses forthcoming, and no certain reason. One guess is that this Book was to *run* after the lost Tomes, and make good to mankind the deficiency

occasioned by want of them; which happy-thought, hide-bound though it be, might have seemed sprightly enough to Hugo and that age. The second guess is that our Author, in the same style of easy wit, meant to say, this Book must *hasten* and run out into the world, and do him a good turn quickly, while it was yet time, he being so very old. But leaving this, we may remark, with certainty enough, that what we have left of Hugo was first printed under this title of *Renner*, at Frankfort on the Mayn, in 1549; and quite incorrectly, being modernized to all lengths, and often without understanding of the sense; the Edition moreover is now rare, and Lessing's project of a new one did not take effect; so that, except in Manuscripts, of which there are many, and in printed Extracts, which also are numerous, the *Renner* is to most readers a sealed book.

In regard to its literary merit opinions seem to be nearly unanimous. The highest merit, that of poetical unity, or even the lower merit of logical unity, is not ascribed to it by the warmest panegyrist. Apparently this work had been a sort of store-chest, wherein the good Hugo had, from time to time, deposited the fruits of his meditation as they chanced to ripen for him; here a little, and there a little, in all varieties of kind; till the chest being filled, or the fruits nearly exhausted, it was sent forth and published to the world, by the easy process of turning up the bottom.

'No theme,' says Bouterwek, 'leads with certainty to the other: satirical descriptions, proverbs, fables, jests, and other narratives all huddled together at random, to teach us in a poetical way a series of moral lessons. A strained and

frosty Allegory opens the work: then follow the Chapters of *Meyden* (Maids); of Wicked Masters; of Pages; of Priests, Monks, and Friars, with great minuteness; then of a Young Minx with an Old Man; then of Bad Landlords, and of Robbers. Next come divers Virtues and Vices, all painted out, and judged of. Towards the end, there follows a sort of Moral Natural History; Considerations on the dispositions of various Animals; a little Botany and Physiology; then again all manner of didactic Narratives; and finally a Meditation on the Last Day.'

Whereby it would appear clearly, as hinted, that Hugo's *Runner* pursues no straight course; and only through the most labyrinthic mazes, here wandering in deep thickets, or even sinking in moist bogs, there panting over mountain-tops by narrow sheep-tracks; but for most part jigging lightly on sunny greens, accomplishes his wonderful journey.

Nevertheless, as we ourselves can testify, there is a certain charm in the worthy man; his Work, such as it is, seems to flow direct from the heart, in natural, spontaneous abundance; is at once cheerful and earnest; his own simple, honest, mildly decided character is everywhere visible. Besides Hugo, as we said, is a person of understanding; has looked over many provinces of Life, not without insight; in his quiet, sly way, can speak forth a shrewd word on occasion. There is a genuine though slender vein of Humour in him; nor in his satire does he ever lose temper, but rebukes sportfully; not indeed laughing aloud, scarcely even sardonically smiling, yet with a certain subdued roguery, and patriarchal knowingness. His fancy too, if not brilliant, is copious almost beyond measure; no

end to his crotchets, suppositions, minute specifications. Withal he is original: his maxims, even when professedly borrowed, have passed through the test of his own experience; all carries in it some stamp of his personality. Thus the *Renner*, though in its whole extent perhaps too boundless and planless for ordinary nerves, makes, in the fragmentary state, no unpleasant reading: that old doggerel is not without significance; often in its straggling, broken, entangled strokes some vivid antique picture is strangely brought out for us.

As a specimen of Hugo's general manner, we select a small portion of his Chapter on *The Maidens*; that passage where he treats of the highest enterprise a maiden can engage in, the choosing of a husband. It will be seen at once that Hugo is no Minnesinger, glozing his fair audience with madrigals and hypocritical gallantry; but a quiet Natural Historian, reporting such facts as he finds, in perfect good nature, it is true, yet not without an under-current of satirical humour. His quaint style of thought, his garrulous minuteness of detail are partly apparent here. The first few lines we may give in the original also; not as they stand in the Frankfort Edition, but as professing to derive themselves from a genuine ancient source:

Kortzyn mut und lanye haar
han die meyde sunderbar
dy zu yren jaren kommen synt
dy wal machen yn dax hertze blynt
dy auchgn wysen yn den weg
von den auchgn get eyn steg
tzu dem hertzen nit gar lang

uff deme stege ist vyl mannig gedang
*wen sy woln nemen oder nit.**

Short of sense and long of hair,
Strange enough the maidens are;
Once they to their teens have got,
Such a choosing, this or that:
Eyes they have that ever spy,
From the Eyes a Path doth lie
To the Heart, and is not long,
Hereon travel thoughts a throng,
Which one they will have or not.

'Wo's me,' continues Hugo, 'how often this same is repeated; till they grow all confused how to choose, from so many, whom they have brought in without number. First they bethink them so: This one is short, that one is long; he is courtly and old, the other young and ill-favoured; this is lean, that is bald; here is one fat, there one thin; this is noble, that is weak; he never yet broke a spear: one is white, another black; that other is named Master Hack (*hartz*); this is pale, that again is red; he seldom eateth cheerful bread;'

and so on, through endless other varieties, in new streams of soft-murmuring doggerel, whereon, as on the Path it would represent, do travel thoughts a throng, which one these fair irresolutes will have or not.

Thus, for Hugo, the age of Minstrelsy is gone: not soft Love-ditties, and hymns of Lady-worship, but sceptical criticism, importunate animadversion, not without a shade of mockery, will he indite. The age of Chivalry is gone also. To a Schoolmaster, with empty larder,

* Horn, *Geschichte und Kritik der deutschen Poesie*, s. 44.

the pomp of tournaments could never have been specially interesting; but now such passages of arms, how free and gallant soever, appear to him no other than the probable product of delirium. 'God might well laugh, 'could it be,' says he, 'to see his mannikins live so 'wondrously on this Earth: two of them will take to 'fighting, and nowise let it alone; nothing serves but 'with two long spears they must ride and stick at one 'another: greatly to their hurt; for when one is by the 'other skewered through the bowels or through the 'weazand, he hath small profit thereby. But who 'forced them to such straits?' The answer is too plain: some modification of Insanity. Nay, so contemptuous is Hugo of all chivalrous things, that he openly grudges any time spent in reading of them; in Don Quixote's Library he would have made short work:

> How Master Dietrich fought with Ecken,
> And how of old the stalwart Recken
> Were all by women's craft betrayed:
> Such things you oft here sung and said,
> And wept at, like a case of sorrow;—
> Of our own Sins we'll think to-morrow.

This last is one of Hugo's darker strokes; for commonly, though moral perfection is ever the one thing needful with him, he preaches in a quite cheerful tone; nay, ever and anon, enlivens us with some timely joke. Considerable part, and apparently much the best part, of his work is occupied with satirical Fables, and *Schwänke* (jests, comic tales); of which latter class we have seen some possessing true humour, and the simplicity which is their next merit. These, however, we must wholly

omit; and indeed, without farther parleying, here part company with Hugo. We leave him, not without esteem, and a touch of affection, due to one so true-hearted, and, under that old humble guise, so gifted with intellectual talent. Safely enough may be conceded him the dignity of chief moral Poet of his time; nay perhaps, for his solid character, and modest manly ways, a much higher dignity. Though his Book can no longer be considered, what the Frankfort Editor describes it in his interminable title-page, as a universal *vade-mecum* for mankind, it is still 'so adorned with many fine sayings,' and in itself of so curious a texture, that it seems well worth preserving. A proper Edition of the *Renner* will one day doubtless make its appearance among the Germans. Hugo is farther remarkable as the precursor and prototype of Sebastian Brandt, whose *Narrenschiff* (Ship of Fools) has, with perhaps less merit, had infinitely better fortune than the *Renner*.

Some half century later in date, and no less didactic in character than Hugo's *Renner*, another Work, still rising visible above the level of those times, demands some notice from us. This is the *Edelstein* (Gem) of Bonerius, or Boner, which at one time, to judge by the number of Manuscripts, whereof fourteen are still in existence, must have enjoyed great popularity; and indeed, after long years of oblivion, it has, by recent critics and redactors, been again brought into some circulation. Boner's *Gem* is a collection of a Hundred Fables done into German rhyme; and derives its proud designation not more perhaps from the supposed excellence of the work, than from a witty allusion to the

title of Fable First, which, in the chief Manuscript, chances to be that well-known one of the Cock scraping for Barleycorns, and finding instead thereof a precious stone (*Edelstein*) or Gem: *Von einem Hanen und dem Edelen steine;* whereupon the author, or some kind friend, remarks in a sort of Prologue:

Dies Büchlein may der Edelstein
Wol heiszen wand es in treit (in sich trägt)
Bischaft (Beispiel) manger kluogheit.

'This Bookling may well be called the Gem, sith it 'includes examples of many a prudence;'—which name, accordingly, as we see, it bears even to this day.

Boner and his Fables have given rise to much discussion among the Germans: scattered at short distances throughout the last hundred years, there is a series of Selections, Editions, Translations, Critical Disquisitions, some of them in the shape of Academic Program; among the labourers in which enterprise we find such men as Gellert and Lessing. A *Bonerii Gemma*, or Latin version of the work, was published by Oberlin, in 1782; Eschenburg sent forth an Edition in modern German, in 1810; Benecke a reprint of the antique original, in 1816. So that now a faithful duty has been done to Boner; and what with bibliographical inquiries, what with vocabularies, and learned collations of texts, he that runs may read whatever stands written in the *Gem*.

Of these diligent lucubrations, with which we strangers are only in a remote degree concerned, it will be sufficient here to report in few words the main results, —not indeed very difficult to report. First then, with

regard to Boner himself, we have to say that nothing whatever has been discovered: who, when, or what that worthy moralist was, remains, and may always remain, entirely uncertain. It is merely conjectured, from the dialect, and other more minute indications, that his place of abode was the north-west quarter of Switzerland; with still higher probability that he lived about the middle of the fourteenth century; from his learning a devout pacific temper, some have inferred that he was a monk or priest; however, in one Manuscript of his *Gem*, he is designated, apparently by some ignorant Transcriber, a knight, *ein Ritter goiz alsus:* from all which, as above said, our only conclusion is that nothing can be concluded.

Johann Scherz, about the year 1710, in what he called *Philosophiæ moralis Germanorum medii ævi Specimen*, sent forth certain of these Fables, with expositions, but apparently without naming the Author; to which *Specimen* Gellert in his *Dissertatio de poesi apologorum* had again, some forty years afterwards, invited attention. Nevertheless, so total was the obscurity which Boner had fallen into, that Bodmer, already known as the resuscitator of the *Nibelungen Lied*, in printing the *Edelstein* from an old Manuscript, in 1752, mistook its probable date by about a century, and gave his work the title of *Fables from the Minnesinger Period*,* without naming the Fabulist, or guessing whether there were one or many. In this condition stood the matter, when

* Koch also, with a strange deviation from his usual accuracy dates Boner, in one place, 1220; and in another, 'towards the l ter half of the fourteenth century.' See his *Compendium*, p. and p. 200, vol. i.'

several years afterwards, Lessing, pursuing another inquiry, came across the track of this Boner; was allured into it; proceeded to clear it; and moving briskly forward, with a sure eye and sharp critical axe, hewed away innumerable entanglements; and so opened out a free avenue and vista, where strangely, in remote depth of antiquarian woods, the whole ancient Fable-manufactory, with Boner and many others working in it, becomes visible, in all the light which probably will ever be admitted to it. He who has perplexed himself with *Romulus and Rimicius*, and Nevelet's *Anonymus*, and *Avianus*, and still more, with the false guidance of their many commentators, will find help and deliverance in this light, thorough-going Inquiry of Lessing's.*

Now, therefore, it became apparent: first, that those supposed *Fables from the Minnesinger Period*, of Bodmer, were in truth written by one Boner, in quite another Period; secondly, that Boner was not properly the author of them, but the borrower and free versifier from certain Latin originals; farther, that the real title was *Edelstein;* and strangest of all, that the work had been printed three centuries before Bodmer's time, namely, at Bamberg, in 1461; of which Edition, indeed, a tattered copy, typographically curious, lay, and probably lies, in the Wolfenbüttel Library, where Lessing then waited, and wrote. The other discoveries, touching Boner's personality, and locality, are but conjectures, due also to Lessing, and have been stated already.

* *Sämmtliche Schriften*, B. 8.

As to the *Gem* itself, about which there has been such scrambling, we may say, now when it is cleaned and laid out before us, that, though but a small seed-pearl, it has a genuine value. To us Boner is interesting by his antiquity, as the speaking witness of many long-past things; to his contemporaries again he must have been still more interesting as the reporter of so many new things. These Fables of his, then for the first time rendered out of inaccessible Latin* into German metre, contain no little edifying matter, had we not known it before; our old friends, the Fox with the musical Raven; the Man and Boy taking their Ass to market, and so inadequate to please the public in their method of transporting him; the Bishop that gave his Nephew a Cure of Souls, but durst not trust him with

* The two originals to whom Lessing has traced all his Fables are *Avianus* and Nevelet's *Anonymus*; concerning which personages the following brief notice by Jördens (*Lexicon*, i. 161) may be inserted here: 'Flavius Avianus (who must not 'be confounded with another Latin Poet, *Avienus*) lived, as is 'believed, under the two Antonines in the second century: he has 'left us forty-two Fables in elegiac measure, the best Editions of 'which are that by Kannegiesser (Amsterdam, 1731), that by,' &c. &c. With respect to the *Anonymus* again: 'Under this designa-'tion is understood the half-barbarous Latin Poet, whose sixty 'Fables, in elegiac measure, stand in the collection, which Nevelet, 'under the title *Mythologia Æsopica*, published at Frankfort in '1610, and which directly follow those of Avianus in that work. 'They are nothing else than versified translations of the Fables 'written in prose by *Romulus*, a noted Fabulist, whose era cannot 'be fixed, nor even his name made out to complete satisfaction.'— The reader who wants deeper insight into these matters may consult Lessing as cited above.

a Basket of Pears; all these and many more figure here. But apart from the material of his Fables, Boner's style and manner has an abiding merit. He is not so much a Translator as a free Imitator: he tells the story in his own way; appends his own moral, and, except that in the latter department he is apt to be a little prolix, acquits himself to high satisfaction. His narrative, in those old limping rhymes, is cunningly enough brought out: artless, lively, graphic, with a spicing of innocent humour, a certain childlike archness, which is the chief merit of a Fable. Such is the German Æsop; a character whom in the Northwest district of Switzerland, at that time of day, we should hardly have looked for.

Could we hope that to many of our readers the old rough dialect of Boner would be intelligible, it were easy to vindicate these praises. As matters stand, we can only venture on one translated specimen, which in this shape claims much allowance; the Fable, also, is nowise the best, or perhaps the worst, but simply one of the shortest. For the rest, we have rendered the old doggerel into new, with all possible fidelity:

THE FROG AND THE STEER.

Of him that striveth after more honour than he should.

A Frog with Frogling by his side
Came hopping through the plain, one tide:
There he an Ox at grass did spy,
Much anger'd was the Frog thereby;
He said: "Lord God, what was my sin
Thou madest me so small and thin?

Likewise I have no handsome feature,
And all dishonoured is my nature,
To other creatures far and near,
For instance, this same grazing Steer."
The Frog would fain with Bullock cope,
'Gan brisk outblow himself in hope.
Then spake his Frogling: "Father o' me,
It boots not, let thy blowing be;
Thy nature hath forbid this battle,
Thou canst not vie with the black-cattle."
Nathless let be the Frog would not,
Such prideful notion had he got;
Again to blow right sore 'gan he,
And said: "Like Ox could I but be
In size, within this world there were
No Frog so glad, to thee I swear."
The Son spake: "Father, me is wo
Thou should'st torment thy body so,
I fear thou art to lose thy life,
Come follow me and leave this strife;
Good Father, take advice of me
And let thy boastful blowing be."
Frog said: "Thou need'st not beck and nod,
I will not do't, so help me God;
Big as this Ox is I must turn,
Mine honour now it doth concern."
He blew himself, and burst in twain,
Such of that blowing was his gain.

The like hath oft been seen of such
Who grasp at honour overmuch;
They must with none at all be doing,
But sink full soon and come to ruin.
He that, with wind of Pride accurs'd,
Much puffs himself, will surely burst:

He men miswishes and misjudges,
Inferiors scorns, superiors grudges,
Of all his equals is a hater,
Much griev'd he is at any better;
Wherefore it were a sentence wise
Were his whole body set with Eyes,
Who envy hath, to see so well
What lucky hap each man befell,
That so he filled were with fury,
And burst asunder in a hurry;
And so full soon betid him this
Which to the Frog betided is.

Readers to whom such stinted twanging of the true Poetic Lyre, such cheerful fingering, though only of one and its lowest string, has any melody, may find enough of it in Benecke's *Boner*, a reproduction, as above stated, of the original *Edelstein*; which Edition we are authorized to recommend as furnished with all helps for such a study: less adventurous readers may still, from Eschenburg's half-modernised Edition, derive some contentment and insight.

Hugo von Trimberg and Boner, who stand out here as our chief Literary representatives of the Fourteenth Century, could play no such part in their own day, when the great men, who shone in the world's eye, were Theologians and Jurists, Politicians at the Imperial Diet; at best, Professors in the new Universities; of whom all memory has long since perished. So different is universal from temporary importance, and worth belonging to our manhood from that merely of our station or calling. Nevertheless, as every writer, of any true gifts, is 'citizen both of his time and of his country,'

and the more completely the greater his gifts; so in the works of these two secluded individuals, the characteristic tendencies and spirit of their age may best be discerned.

Accordingly, in studying their commentators, one fact that cannot but strike us is, the great prevalence and currency which this species of Literature, cultivated by them, had obtained in that era. Of Fable Literature, especially, this was the summer-tide and highest efflorescence. The Latin originals which Boner partly drew from, descending, with manifold transformations and additions, out of classical times, were in the hands of the learned; in the living memories of the people were numerous fragments of primeval Oriental Fable, derived perhaps through Palestine; from which two sources, curiously intermingled, a whole stream of Fables evolved itself; whereat the morally athirst, such was the genius of that time, were not slow to drink. Boner, as we have seen, worked in a field then zealously cultivated: nay, was not Æsop himself, what we have for Æsop, a contemporary of his; the Greek Monk Planudes and the Swiss Monk Boner might be chanting their Psalter at one and the same hour!

Fable, indeed, may be regarded as the earliest and simplest product of Didactic Poetry, the first attempt of Instruction clothing itself in Fancy: hence the antiquity of Fables, their universal diffusion in the childhood of nations, so that they have become a common property of all: hence also their acceptance and diligent culture among the Germans, among the Europeans, in this the first stage of an era when the whole bent of Literature was Didactic. But the Fourteenth

Century was the age of Fable in a still wider sense: it was the age when whatever Poetry there remained took the shape of Apologue and moral Fiction: the higher spirit of Imagination had died away, or withdrawn itself into Religion; the lower and feebler not only took continual counsel of Understanding, but was content to walk in its leading-strings. Now was the time when human life and its relations were looked at with an earnest practical eye; and the moral perplexities that occur there, when man, hemmed in between the Would and the Should, or the Must, painfully hesitates, or altogether sinks in that collision, were not only set forth in the way of precept, but embodied, for still clearer instruction, in Examples, and edifying Fictions. The Monks themselves, such of them as had any talent, meditated and taught in this fashion: witness that strange *Gesta Romanorum*, still extant, and once familiar over all Europe;—a Collection of Moral Tales, expressly devised for the use of Preachers, though only the Shakspeares, and in subsequent times, turned it to right purpose.* These and the like old *Gests*, with most of which the *Romans* had so little to do, were the staple Literature of that period; cultivated with great assiduity, and so far as mere invention, or compilation, of incident goes, with no little merit; for already almost all the grand destinies, and fundamental ever-recurring entanglements of human life, are laid hold of and depicted here; so that, from the first, our modern Novelists and Dramatists could find nothing

* See an account of this curious Book in Douce's learned and ingenious *Illustrations of Shakspeare.*

new under the sun, but everywhere, in contrivance of their Story, saw themselves forestalled. The boundless abundance of Narratives then current, the singular derivations and transmigrations of these, surprise antiquarian commentators: but, indeed, it was in this same century that Boccaccio, refining the gold from that so copious dross, produced his *Decamerone*, which still indicates the same fact in more pleasant fashion, to all readers. That in these universal tendencies of the time the Germans participated and co-operated, Boner's Fables, and Hugo's many Narrations, serious and comic, may, like two specimens from a great multitude, point out to us. The Madrigal had passed into the Apologue; the Heroic Poem, with its supernatural machinery and sentiment, into the Fiction of practical Life: in which latter species a prophetic eye might have discerned the coming *Tom Joneses* and *Wilhelm Meisters*; and with still more astonishment, the *Minerva Presses* of all nations, and this their huge transit-trade in Rags, all lifted from the dunghill, printed on, and returned thither, to the comfort of parties interested.

The Drama, as is well known, had an equally Didactic origin; namely, in those *Mysteries* contrived by the clergy for bringing home religious truth, with new force, to the universal comprehension. That this cunning device had already found its way into Germany, we have proof in a document too curious to be omitted here:

'In the year 1322, there was a play shewn at Eisenach, which had a tragical enough effect. Markgraf Friedrich of Misnia, Landgraf also of Thuringia, having brought his tedious warfares to a conclusion, and the country beginning now to revive under peace, his subjects were busy repaying

themselves for the past distresses by all manner of diversions; to which end, apparently by the Sovereign's order, a dramatic representation of the *Ten Virgins* was schemed, and at Eisenach, in his presence, duly executed. This happened fifteen days after Easter, by indulgence of the Preaching Friars. In the *Chronicon Sampetrinum*, stands recorded that the play was enacted in the Beargarden (*in horto ferarum*), by the clergy and their scholars. But now, when it came to pass that the Wise Virgins would give the Foolish no oil, and these latter were shut out from the Bridegroom, they began to weep bitterly, and called on the Saints to intercede for them; who, however, even with Mary at their head, could effect nothing from God; but the Foolish Virgins were all sentenced to damnation. Which things the Landgraf seeing and hearing, he fell into a doubt, and was very angry; and said, "What then is the Christian Faith, if God will not take pity on us, for intercession of Mary and all the Saints?" In this anger he continued five days; and the learned men could hardly enlighten him to understand the Gospel. Thereupon he was struck with apoplexy, and became speechless and powerless; in which sad state he continued, bed-rid, two years and seven months, and so died, being then fifty-five.'*

Surely a serious warning, would they but take it, to Dramatic Critics, not to venture beyond their depth! Had this fiery old Landgraf given up the reins of his imagination into his author's hands, he might have been pleased he knew not why: whereas the meshes of Theology, in which he kicks and struggles, here strangle the life out of him; and the Ten Virgins at Eisenach are more fatal to warlike men, than Æschylus' Furies at Athens were to weak women.

* Flögel, (*Geschichte der komischen Litteratur*, iv. 287), who founds on that old *Chronicon Sampetrinum Erfurtense*, contained in Menke's Collection.

Neither were the unlearned People without their Literature, their Narrative Poetry; though how, in an age without printing and bookstalls, it was circulated among them; whether by strolling *Fiedelers* (Minstrels), who might recite as well as fiddle, or by other methods, we have not learned. However, its existence and abundance in this era is sufficiently evinced by the multitude of *Volksbücher* (People's-Books) which issued from the Press, next century, almost as soon as there was a Press. Several of these, which still languidly survive among the people, or at least the children, of all countries, were of German composition; of most, so strangely had they been sifted and winnowed to and fro, it was impossible to fix the origin. But borrowed or domestic, they nowhere wanted admirers in Germany: the *Patient Helena*, the *Fair Magelone*, *Blue-Beard*, *Fortunatus*; these, and afterwards the *Seven Wise Masters*, with other more directly Æsopic ware, to which the introduction of the old Indian Stock, or *Book of Wisdom*, translated from John of Capua's Latin,* one day formed a rich accession, were in all memories, and on all tongues.

Beautiful traits of Imagination and a pure genuine feeling, though under the rudest forms, shine forth in some of these old Tales: for instance, in *Magelone* and *Fortunatus*; which two, indeed, with others of a different stamp, Ludwig Tieck has, with singular talent, ventured, not unsuccessfully, to reproduce in our own time and dialect. A second class distinguish themselves by a homely, honest-hearted Wisdom, full of character and

* In 1483, by command of a certain Eberhard, Duke of Würtemberg. What relation this old *Book of Wisdom* bears to our actual *Pilpay*, we have not learned.

quaint devices; of which class the *Seven Wise Masters*, extracted chiefly from that *Gesta Romanorum* above mentioned, and containing 'proverb-philosophy, anec-'dotes, fables and jests, the seeds of which, on the fertile 'German soil, spread luxuriantly through several gene-'rations,' is perhaps the best example. Lastly, in a third class, we find in full play that spirit of broad drollery, of rough saturnine Humour, which the Germans claim as a special characteristic; among these, we must not omit to mention the *Schiltbürger*, correspondent to our own *Wise Men of Gotham*; still less, the far-famed *Tyll Eulenspiegel* (Tyll Owlglass), whose rogueries and waggeries belong, in the fullest sense, to this era.

This last is a true German work; for both the man Tyll Eulenspiegel, and the Book which is his history, were produced there. Nevertheless, Tyll's fame has gone abroad into all lands: this, the Narrative of his exploits, has been published in innumerable editions, even with all manner of learned glosses, and translated into Latin, English, French, Dutch, Polish; nay, in several languages, as in his own, an *Eulenspiegelerei*, an *Espièglerie*, or dog's-trick, so named after him, still, by consent of lexicographers, keeps his memory alive. We may say, that to few mortals has it been granted to earn such a place in Universal History as Tyll: for now after five centuries, when Wallace's birth-place is unknown even to the Scots; and the admirable Crichton still more rapidly is grown a shadow; and Edward Longshanks sleeps unregarded save by a few Antiquarian English,—Tyll's native village is pointed out with pride to the traveller, and his tombstone, with a sculptured pun on his name, an Owl, namely, and a Glass, still stands, or

pretends to stand, 'at Möllen, near Lübeck,' where, since 1350, his once nimble bones have been at rest. Tyll, in the calling he had chosen, naturally led a wandering life, as place after place became too hot for him; by which means he saw into many things with his own eyes: having been not only over all Westphalia and Saxony, but even in Poland, and as far as Rome. That in his old days, like other great men, he became an Autobiographer, and in trustful winter evenings, not on paper, but on air, and to the laughter-lovers of Möllen, composed this work himself, is purely a hypothesis; certain only that it came forth originally in the dialect of this region, namely the *Platt-Deutsch*; and was therefrom translated, probably about a century afterwards, into its present High German, as Lessing conjectures, by one Thomas Mürner, who on other grounds is not unknown to antiquaries. For the rest, write it who might, the Book is here, 'abounding,' as a wise Critic remarks, 'in inventive humour, in rough merriment and broad 'drollery, not without a keen rugged shrewdness of in-'sight; which properties must have made it irresistibly 'captivating to the popular sense; and, with all its fan-'tastic extravagancies and roguish crotchets, in many 'points instructive.'

From Tyll's so captivating achievements, we shall here select one to insert some account of; the rather as the tale is soon told, and by means of it, we catch a little trait of manners, and, through Tyll's spectacles, may peep into the interior of a Household, even of a Parsonage, in those old days.

'It chanced after so many adventures, that Eulenspiegel

came to a Parson, who promoted him to be his Sacristan, or as we now say, Sexton. Of this Parson it is recorded that he kept a Concubine, who had but one eye; she also had a spite at Tyll, and was wont to speak evil of him to his master, and report his rogueries. Now while Eulenspiegel held this Sextoncy, the Easter-season came, and there was to be a play set forth of the Resurrection of Our Lord. And as the people were not learned, and could not read, the Parson took his Concubine and stationed her in the holy Sepulchre by way of Angel. Which thing Eulenspiegel seeing, he took to him three of the simplest persons that could be found there, to enact the Three Marys; and the Parson himself, with a flag in his hand, represented Christ. Thereupon spake Eulenspiegel to the simple persons: "When the Angel asks you, Whom ye seek, ye must answer, The Parson's one-eyed Concubine." Now it came to pass that the time arrived when they were to act, and the Angel asked them: "Whom seek ye here?" and they answered, as Eulenspiegel had taught and bidden them, and said: "We seek the Parson's one-eyed Concubine." Whereby did the Parson observe that he was made a mock of. And when the Parson's Concubine heard the same, she started out of the Grave, and aimed a box at Eulenspiegel's face, but missed him, and hit one of the simple persons, who were representing the Three Marys. This latter then returned her a slap on the mouth, whereupon she caught him by the hair. But his wife seeing this, came running thither, and fell upon the Parson's Harlot. Which thing the Parson discerning, he threw down his flag, and sprang forward to his Harlot's assistance. Thus gave they one another hearty thwacking and basting, and there was great uproar in the Church. But when Eulenspiegel perceived that they all had one another by the ears in the Church, he went his ways, and came no more back.'*

* Flögel, iv. 290. For more of Eulenspiegel, see Görres' *Ueber die Volksbücher.*

These and the like pleasant narratives were the People's Comedy in those days. Neither was their Tragedy wanting; as indeed both spring up spontaneously in all regions of human Life; however, their chief work of this latter class, the wild, deep, and now world-renowned, *Legend of Faust*, belongs to a somewhat later date.*

* To the fifteenth century, say some who fix it on Johann Faust, the Goldsmith and partial Inventor of Printing: to the sixteenth century, say others, referring it to Johann Faust, Doctor in Philosophy; which individual did actually, as the Tradition also bears, study first at Wittenberg (where he might be one of Luther's pupils), then at Ingolstadt, where also he taught, and had a *Famulus* named Wagner, son of a clergyman at Wasserberg. Melancthon, Tritheim, and other credible witnesses, some of whom had seen the man, vouch sufficiently for these facts. The rest of the Doctor's history is much more obscure. He seems to have been of a vehement, unquiet temper; skilled in Natural Philosophy, and perhaps in the occult science of Conjuring, by aid of which two gifts, a much shallower man, wandering in Need and Pride over the world in those days, might, without any Mephistopheles, have worked wonders enough. Nevertheless, that he rode off through the air on a wine-cask, from Auerbach's Keller at Leipsic, in 1523, seems questionable; though an old carving, in that venerable Tavern, still mutely asserts it to the toper of this day. About 1560, his term of Thaumaturgy being over, he disappeared: whether, under feigned name, by the rope of some hangman; or, 'frightfully torn in pieces by the Devil, near the village of Rim-'lich, between Twelve and One in the morning,' let each reader judge for himself. The latter was clearly George Rudolf Wiedemann's opinion, whose *Veritable History of the abominable Sins of Dr. Johann Faust*, came out at Hamburg in 1599; and is no less circumstantially announced in the old People's Book, *That everywhere-infamous Arch-Black-Artist and Conjuror, Dr. Faust's Compact with the Devil, wonderful Walk and Conversation, and terrible End*, printed, seemingly without date, at Köln (Cologne) and Nürnberg; read by every one; written by we know

Thus, though the Poetry which spoke in rhyme was feeble enough, the spirit of Poetry could nowise be regarded as extinct; while Fancy, Imagination, and all the intellectual faculties necessary for that art, were in active exercise. Neither had the Enthusiasm of heart, on which it still more intimately depends, died out; but only taken another form. In lower degrees it expressed itself as an ardent zeal for Knowledge, and Improvement; for spiritual excellence such as the time held out and prescribed. This was no languid, low-minded age; but of earnest busy effort; in all provinces of culture, resolutely struggling forward. Classical Literature, after long hinderances, had now found its way into Germany also: old Rome was open, with all its wealth, to the intelligent eye; scholars of Chrysoloras were fast unfolding the treasures of Greece. School Philosophy, which had never obtained firm footing among the Germans, was in all countries drawing to a close; but the subtle, piercing vision, which it had fostered and called into activity, was henceforth to employ itself with new profit on more substantial interests. In such manifold praiseworthy endeavours the most ardent mind had ample arena.

A higher, purer enthusiasm, again, which no longer found its place in chivalrous Minstrelsy, might still retire to meditate and worship in religious Cloisters, where, amid all the corruption of monkish manners, there were not wanting men who aimed at, and ac-

not whom. See again, for farther insight, Görres' *Ueber die deutschen Volksbücher*. Another Work (Leipsic, 1824), expressly 'On Faust and the Wandering Jew,' which latter, in those times, wandered much in Germany, is also referred to. — *Conv. Lexicon*, § *Faust*.

complished, the highest problem of manhood, a life of spiritual Truth. Among the Germans, especially, that deep-feeling, deep-thinking, devout temper, now degenerating into abstruse theosophy, now purifying itself into holy eloquence, and clear apostolic light, was awake in this era; a temper which had long dwelt, and still dwells there; which ere long was to render that people worthy the honour of giving Europe a new Reformation, a new Religion. As an example of monkish diligence and zeal, if of nothing more, we here mention the German Bible of Mathias von Behaim, which, in his Hermitage at Halle, he rendered from the Vulgate, in 1343; the Manuscript of which is still to be seen in Leipzig. Much more conspicuous stand two other German Priests of this Period; to whom, as connected with Literature also, a few words must now be devoted.

Johann Tauler is a name which fails in no Literary History of Germany: he was a man famous in his own day as the most eloquent of preachers; is still noted by critics for his intellectual deserts; by pious persons, especially of the class called Mystics, is still studied as a practical instructor; and by all true inquirers prized as a person of high talent and moral worth. Tauler was a Dominican Monk; seems to have lived and preached at Strasburg; where, as his grave-stone still testifies, he died in 1361. His devotional works have been often edited: one of his modern admirers has written his biography; wherein perhaps this is the strangest fact, if it be one, that once in the pulpit, 'he 'grew suddenly dumb, and did nothing but weep; in 'which despondent state he continued for two whole 'years.' Then, however, he again lifted up his voice, with new energy and new potency. We learn farther,

that he 'renounced the dialect of Philosophy, and spoke direct to the heart in language of the heart.' His Sermons, composed in Latin and delivered in German, in which language, after repeated renovations and changes of dialect, they are still read, have, with his other writings, been characterised, by a native critic worthy of confidence, in these terms:

'They contain a treasure of meditations, hints, indications, full of heartfelt piety, which still speak to the inmost longings and noblest wants of man's mind. His style is abrupt, compressed, significant in its conciseness; the nameless depth of feelings struggles with the phraseology. He was the first that wrested from our German speech the fit expression for ideas of moral Reason and Emotion, and has left us riches in that kind, such as the zeal for purity and fulness of language in our own days cannot leave unheeded.' —Tauler, it is added, 'was a man who, imbued with genuine Devoutness, as it springs from the depths of a soul strengthened in self-contemplation, and, free and all-powerful, rules over Life and Effort,—attempted to train and win the people for a duty which had hitherto been considered as that of the learned class alone: to raise the Lay-world into moral study of Religion for themselves, that so, enfranchised from the bonds of unreflecting custom, they might regulate Creed and Conduct by strength self-acquired. He taught men to look within; by spiritual contemplation to feel the secret of their higher Destiny; to seek in their own souls what from without is never, or too scantily afforded; self-believing, to create what, by the dead letter of foreign Tradition, can never be brought forth.'*

* Wachler, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der deutschen National-litteratur* (Lectures on the History of German National Literature), b. i. s. 131.

Known to all Europe, as Tauler is to Germany, and of a class with him, as a man of antique Christian walk, of warm devoutly-feeling poetic spirit, and insight and experience in the deepest regions of man's heart and life, follows, in the next generation, Thomas Hamerken, or Hammerlein (*Malleolus*); usually named *Thomas à Kempis*, that is, *Thomas of Kempen*, a village near Cologne, where he was born in 1388. Others contend that Kampen in Overyssel was his birthplace; however, in either case, at that era, more especially considering what he did, we can here regard him as a *Deutscher*, a German. For his spiritual and intellectual character we may refer to his works, written in the Latin tongue, and still known; above all, to his far-famed work *De Imitatione Christi*, which has been praised by such men as Luther, Leibnitz, Haller; and, what is more, has been read, and continues to be read, with moral profit, in all Christian languages and communions, having passed through upwards of a thousand editions, which number is yet daily increasing. A new English *Thomas à Kempis* was published only the other year. But the venerable man deserves a word from us, not only as a high, spotless Priest, and father of the Church, at a time when such were rare, but as a zealous promoter of learning, which, in his own country, he accomplished much to forward. Hammerlein, the son of poor parents, had been educated at the famous school of Deventer; he himself instituted a similar one at Zwoll, which long continued the grand classical seminary of the North. Among his own pupils we find enumerated Moritz von Spiegelberg, Rudolf von Lange, Rudolf Agricola, Antonius Liber, Ludwig Dringenberg, Alexander Hegius; of

whom Agricola, with other two, by advice of their teacher, visited Italy to study Greek; the whole six, united through manhood and life, as they had been in youth and at school, are regarded as the founders of true classical literature among the Germans. Their scholastico-monastic establishments at Deventer, with Zwoll and its other numerous offspring, which rapidly extended themselves over the northwest of Europe from Artois to Silesia, and operated powerfully both in a moral and intellectual view, are among the characteristic redeeming features of that time; but the details of them fall not within our present limits.*

If now, quitting the Cloister and Library, we look abroad over active Life, and the general state of culture and spiritual endeavour as manifested there, we have on all hands the cheering prospect of a society in full progress. The Practical Spirit, which had pressed forward into Poetry itself, could not but be busy and successful in those provinces where its home specially lies. Among the Germans, it is true, so far as political condition was concerned, the aspect of affairs had not changed for the better. The Imperial Constitution was weakened and loosened into the mere semblance of a Government; the head of which had still the title, but no longer the reality of sovereign power; so that Germany, ever since the times of Rudolf, had, as it were, ceased to be one great nation, and become a disunited, often conflicting aggregate of small nations. Nay, we may almost say, of petty districts, or even of households: for now, when every pitiful Baron claimed to be an independent poten-

* See Eichhorn's *Geschichte der Litteratur*, b. ii. s. 134.

tate, and exercised his divine right of peace and war too often in plundering the industrious Burgher, public Law could no longer vindicate the weak against the strong: except the venerable unwritten code of *Faustrecht* (Club-Law), there was no other valid. On every steep rock, or difficult fastness, these dread sovereigns perched themselves; studding the country with innumerable *Raubschlösser* (Robber-Towers), which now in the eye of the picturesque tourist look interesting enough, but in those days were interesting on far other grounds. Herein dwelt a race of persons, proud, ignorant, hungry; who, boasting of an endless pedigree, talked familiarly of living on the produce of their 'Saddles' (*vom Sattel zu leben*), that is to say, by the profession of highwayman; for which unluckily, as just hinted, there was then no effectual gallows. Some, indeed, might plunder as the eagle, others as the vulture and crow; but, in general, from men cultivating that walk of life, no profit in any other was to be looked for. Vain was it, however, for the Kaiser to publish edict on edict against them; nay, if he destroyed their Robber-Towers, new ones were built; was the old wolf hunted down, the cub had escaped, who reappeared when his teeth were grown. Not till industry and social cultivation had everywhere spread, and risen supreme, could that brood, in detail, be extirpated or tamed.

Neither was this miserable defect of police the only misery in such a state of things. For the saddle-eating Baron, even in pacific circumstances, naturally looked down on the fruit-producing Burgher; who, again, feeling himself a wiser, wealthier, better, and in time a stronger man, ill brooked this procedure, and retaliated,

or, by quite declining such communications, avoided it. Thus, throughout long centuries, and after that old Code of Club-Law had been well nigh abolished, the effort of the nation was still divided into two courses; the Noble and the Citizen would not work together, freely imparting and receiving their several gifts; but the culture of the polite arts, and that of the useful arts, had to proceed with mutual disadvantage, each on its separate footing. Indeed that supercilious and too marked distinction of ranks, which so ridiculously characterized the Germans, has only in very recent times disappeared.

Nevertheless here, as it ever does, the strength of the country lay in the middle classes; which were sound and active, and, in spite of all these hinderances, daily advancing. The Free Towns, which, in Germany as elsewhere, the sovereign favoured, held within their walls a race of men as brave as they of the Robber-Tower, but exercising their bravery on fitter objects; who, by degrees, too, ventured into the field against even the greatest of these kinglets, and in many a stout fight taught them a juristic doctrine, which no head with all its helmets was too thick for taking in. The Four Forest Cantons had already testified in this way; their Tells and Stauffachers preaching, with apostolic blows and knocks, like so many Luthers; whereby, from their remote Alpine glens, all lands and all times have heard them, and believed them. By dint of such logic it began to be understood everywhere, that a Man, whether clothed in purple cloaks or in tanned sheepskins, wielding the sceptre or the oxgoad, is neither

Deity nor Beast, but simply a Man, and must comport himself accordingly.

But Commerce of itself was pouring new strength into every peaceable community; the Hanse League, now in full vigour, secured the fruits of industry over all the North. The havens of the Netherlands, thronged with ships from every sea, transmitted or collected their wide-borne freight over Germany; where, far inland, flourished market-cities, with their cunning workmen, their spacious warehouses, and merchants who in opulence vied with the richest. Except perhaps in the close vicinity of Robber-Towers, and even there not always nor altogether, Diligence, good Order, peaceful Abundance were everywhere conspicuous in Germany. Petrarch has celebrated, in warm terms, the beauties of the Rhine, as he witnessed them; the rich, embellished, cultivated aspect of land and people: Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius the Second, expresses himself, in the next century, with still greater emphasis; he says, and he could judge, having seen both, 'that the King 'of Scotland did not live so handsomely as a moderate 'Citizen of Nürnberg:' indeed Conrad Celtes, another contemporary witness, informs us, touching these same citizens, that their wives went abroad loaded with the richest jewels, that 'most of their household utensils were of silver and gold.' For, as Æneas Sylvius adds, 'their mercantile activity is astonishing; the greater 'part of the German nation consists of merchants.' Thus, too, in Augsburg, the Fugger family, which sprang, like that of the Medici, from smallest beginnings, were fast rising into that height of commercial greatness, such

that Charles V., in viewing the Royal Treasury at Paris, could say, "I have a weaver in Augsburg able to buy it all with his own gold."* With less satisfac-

* Charles had his reasons for such a speech. This same Anton Fugger, to whom he alluded here, had often stood by him in straits; shewing a munificence and even generosity worthy of the proudest princes. During the celebrated Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, the Emperor lodged for a whole year in Anton's house; and Anton was a man to warm his Emperor 'at a fire of cinnamon wood,' and to burn therein 'the bonds for large sums owing him by his majesty.' For all which, Anton and his kindred had countships, and princeships, in abundance; also the right to coin money, but no solid bullion to exercise such right on; which, however, they repeatedly did on bullion of their own. This Anton left six millions of gold-crowns in cash; 'besides precious articles, jewels, properties in all countries of Europe, and both the Indies.' The Fuggers had ships on every sea, waggons on every highway; they worked the Carinthian Mines; even Albrecht Dürer's Pictures must pass through their warehouses to the Italian market. However, this family had other merits than their mountains of metal, their kindness to needy Sovereigns, and even their all-embracing spirit of commercial enterprise. They were famed for acts of general beneficence, and did much charity where no imperial thanks were to be looked for. To found Hospitals and Schools, on the most liberal scale, was a common thing with them. In the sixteenth century, three benevolent brothers of the House purchased a suburb of Augsburg; rebuilt it with small commodious houses, to be let to indigent industrious burghers for a trifling rent: this is the well-known *Fuggerei*, which still existing, with its own walls and gate, maintains their name in daily currency there.—The founder of this remarkable family did actually drive the shuttle in the village of Göggingen, near Augsburg, about the middle of the Fourteenth Century; 'but in 1619,' says the *Spiegel der Ehren* (Mirror of Honour), 'the noble stem had so branched out, that there were 'forty-seven Counts and Countesses belonging to it, and of young 'descendants as many as there are days in the year.' Four stout

tion the same haughty Monarch had to see his own Nephew wedded to the fair Philippine Welser, daughter of another merchant in that city, and for wisdom and beauty the paragon of her time.*

In this state of economical prosperity, Literature and Art, such kinds of them at least as had a practical application, could not want encouragement. It is mentioned as one of the furtherances to Classical Learning among the Germans, that these Free Towns, as well as numerous petty Courts of Princes, exercising a sovereign power, required individuals of some culture to conduct their Diplomacy; one man able at least to write a handsome Latin style was an indispensable requisite. For a long while even this small accomplishment was not to be acquired in Germany; where, such had been the troublous condition of the Governments, there were yet, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, no Universities:

---

boughs of this same noble stem, in the rank of Princes, still subsist and flourish. 'Thus in the generous Fuggers,' says that above-named *Mirror*, 'was fulfilled our Saviour's promise: Give, and it shall be given you.'—*Conv. Lexicon*, § *Fugger-Geschlecht.*

* The Welsers were of patrician descent, and had for many centuries followed commerce at Augsburg, where, next only to the Fuggers, they played a high part. It was they, for example, that, at their own charges, first colonized Venezuela; that equipped the first German ship to India, 'the Journal of which still exists;' they united with the Fuggers to lend Charles V. twelve *Tonnen Gold*, 1,200,000 Florins. The fair Philippine, by her pure charms and honest wiles, worked out a reconciliation with Kaiser Ferdinand the First, her Father-in-law; lived thirty happy years with her husband; and had medals struck by him, *Divæ Philippinæ*, in honour of her, when (at Inspruck in 1580) he became a widower. —*Conv. Lexicon*, § *Welser.*

however, a better temper and better fortune began at length to prevail among the German Sovereigns; the demands of the time insisted on fulfilment. The University of Prague was founded in 1348, that of Vienna in 1364;* and now, as if to make up for the delay, princes and communities on all hands made haste to establish similar Institutions; so that before the end of the century we find three others, Heidelberg, Cologne, Erfurt; in the course of the next, no fewer than eight more, of which Leipsic (in 1404) is the most remarkable. Neither did this honourable zeal grow cool in the sixteenth century, or even down to our own, when Germany, boasting of some forty great Schools and twenty-two Universities, four of which date within the last thirty years, may fairly reckon itself the best school-provided country in Europe; as, indeed, those who in any measure know it, are aware that it is also indisputably the best educated.

Still more decisive are the proofs of national activity, of progressive culture, among the Germans, if we glance at what concerns the practical Arts. Apart from Uni-

* There seems to be some controversy about the precedence here: Bouterwek gives Vienna, with a date 1333, as the earliest; Koch again puts Heidelberg, 1346, in front; the dates in the Text profess to be taken from Meiner's *Geschichte der Entstehung und Entwickelung der Hohen Schulen unsers Erdtheils* (History of the Origin and Development of High Schools in Europe), Göttingen, 1802. The last established University is that of München (Munich), in 1826. Prussia alone has 21,000 Public Schoolmasters, specially trained to their profession, sometimes even sent to travel for improvement, at the cost of Government. What says 'the most enlightened nation in the world' to this?—Eats its pudding, and says little or nothing.

versities and learned shew, there has always dwelt, in those same Nürnbergs and Augsburgs, a solid, quietly-perseverant spirit, full of old Teutonic character and old Teutonic sense; whereby, ever and anon, from under the bonnet of some rugged German artisan or staid burgher, this and the other World-Invention has been starting forth, where such was least of all looked for. Indeed, with regard to practical Knowledge in general, if we consider the present history and daily life of mankind, it must be owned that while each nation has contributed a share,—the largest share, at least of such shares as can be appropriated and fixed on any special contributor, belongs to Germany. Copernic, Hevel, Kepler, Otto Guericke, are of other times; but in this era also the spirit of Inquiry, of Invention, was especially busy. Gunpowder (of the thirteenth century), though Milton gives the credit of it to Satan, has helped mightily to lessen the horrors of War: thus much at least must be admitted in its favour, that it secures the dominion of civilized over savage man: nay, hereby, in personal contests, not brute Strength, but Courage and Ingenuity, can avail; for the Dwarf and the Giant are alike strong with pistols between them. Neither can Valour now find its best arena in War, in Battle, which is henceforth a matter of calculation and strategy, and the soldier a chess-pawn to shoot and be shot at; whereby that noble quality may at length come to reserve itself for other more legitimate occasions, of which, in this our Life-Battle with Destiny, there are enough. And thus Gunpowder, if it spread the havoc of War, mitigates it in a still higher degree; like some Inoculation,—to which may an extirpating Vaccination one day succeed! It

ought to be stated, however, that the claim of Schwartz to the original invention is dubious; to the sole invention altogether unfounded: the recipe stands, under disguise, in the writings of Roger Bacon; the article itself was previously known in the East.

Far more indisputable are the advantages of Printing: and if the story of Brother Schwartz's mortar giving fire and driving his pestle through the ceiling, in the city of Mentz, as the painful Monk and Alchymist was accidentally pounding the ingredients of our first Gunpowder, is but a fable,—that of our first Book being printed there is much better ascertained. Johann Gutenberg was a native of Mentz; and there, in company with Faust and Schöffer, appears to have completed his invention between the years 1440 and 1449: the famous 'Forty-two line Bible' was printed there in 1455.* Of this noble art, which is like an infinitely intensated organ of Speech, whereby the Voice of a small transitory man may reach not only through all earthly Space, but through all earthly Time, it were needless to repeat the often-repeated praises; or speculate on the practical effects, the most momentous of which are, perhaps, but now becoming visible. On this subject of the Press, and its German origin, a far humbler remark may be in place here; namely, that Rag-paper, the material on which Printing works and lives, was also invented in Germany some hundred and fifty years before. 'The 'oldest specimens of this article yet known to exist,'

* As to the Dutch claim, it rests only on vague local traditions, which were never heard of publicly till their Lorenz Coster had been dead almost a hundred and fifty years; so that, out of Holland, it finds few partisans.

says Eichhorn, 'are some Documents, of the year 1318, 'in the Archives of the Hospital at Kaufbeuern. Breit-'kopf (*Vom Ursprung der Spielkarten*, On the Origin of 'Cards,) has demonstrated our claim to the invention; 'and that France and England borrowed it from Ger-'many, and Spain from Italy.'*

On the invention of Printing there followed naturally a multiplication of Books, and a new activity, which has ever since proceeded at an accelerating rate, in the business of Literature; but for the present, no change in its character or objects. Those Universities, and other Establishments and Improvements, were so many tools which the spirit of the time had devised, not for working out new paths, which were their ulterior issue, but in the meanwhile, for proceeding more commodiously on the old path. In the Prague University, it is true, whither Wickliffe's writings had found their way, a Teacher of more earnest tone had risen, in the person of John Huss, Rector there; whose Books, *Of the Six Errors* and *Of the Church*, still more his energetic, zealously polemical Discourses to the people, were yet unexampled on the Continent. The shameful murder of this man, who lived and died as beseemed a Martyr; and the stern vengeance which his countrymen took for it, unhappily not on the Constance Cardinals, but on less offensive Bohemian Catholics, kept up during twenty years, on the Eastern Border of Germany, an agitating tumult, not only of opinion, but of action: however, the

* B. ii. s. 91.—'The first German Paper-mill we have sure account of,' says Koch, 'worked at Nürnberg in 1390.'—Vol. i. p. 35.

fierce, indomitable Zisca being called away, and the pusillanimous Emperor offering terms, which, indeed, he did not keep, this uproar subsided, and the national activity proceeded in its former course.

In German Literature, during those years, nothing presents itself as worthy of notice here. Chronicles were written; Class-books for the studious, edifying Homilies, in varied guise, for the busy, were compiled: a few Books of Travels make their appearance, among which Translations from our too fabulous countryman, Mandeville, are perhaps the most remarkable. For the rest, Life continued to be looked at less with poetic admiration, than in a spirit of observation and comparison: not without many a protest against clerical and secular error; such, however, seldom rising into the style of grave hate and hostility, but playfully expressing themselves in satire. The old effort towards the Useful; in Literature, the old prevalence of the Didactic, especially of the Æsopic, is everywhere manifest. Of this Æsopic spirit, what phases it successively assumed, and its significance in these, there were much to be said. However, in place of multiplying smaller instances and aspects, let us now take up the highest; and with the best of all Apologues, *Reynard the Fox*, terminate our survey of that Fable-loving time.

The story of *Reinecke Fuchs*, or, to give it the original Low-German name, *Reineke de Fos*, is, more than any other, a truly European performance: for some centuries, a universal household possession and secular Bible, read everywhere, in the palace and the hut; it still interests us, moreover, by its intrinsic worth, being on the whole the most poetical and meritorious pro-

duction of our Western World in that kind; or perhaps of the whole World, though, in such matters, the West has generally yielded to, and learned from, the East.

Touching the origin of this Book, as often happens in like cases, there is a controversy, perplexed not only by inevitable ignorance, but also by anger and false patriotism. Into this vexed sea we have happily no call to venture; and shall merely glance for a moment, from the firm land, where all that can specially concern us in the matter stands rescued and safe. The oldest printed Edition of our actual *Reynard* is that of Lübeck, in 1498; of which there is a copy, understood to be the only one, still extant in the Wolfenbüttel Library. This oldest Edition is in the Low-German or Saxon tongue, and appears to have been produced by Hinrek van Alkmer, who in the preface calls himself 'School-'master and Tutor of that noble virtuous Prince and 'Lord, the Duke of Lorraine;' and says farther, that by order of this same worthy sovereign, he 'sought out and 'rendered the present Book from Walloon and French 'tongue into German, to the praise and honour of God, 'and wholesome edification of whoso readeth therein.' Which candid and business-like statement would doubtless have continued to yield entire satisfaction; had it not been that, in modern days, and while this first Lübeck Edition was still lying in its dusty recess unknown to Bibliomaniacs, another account, dated some hundred years later, and supported by a little subsequent hearsay, had been raked up: how the real Author was Nicholas Baumann, Professor at Rostock; how he had been Secretary to the Duke of Juliers, but was driven from his service by wicked cabals; and so in revenge

composed this satirical adumbration of the Juliers Court; putting on the title-page, to avoid consequences, the feigned tale of its being rendered from the French and Walloon tongue, and the feigned name of Hinrek van Alkmer, who, for the rest, was never Schoolmaster and Tutor at Lorraine, or anywhere else, but a mere man of straw, created for the nonce, out of so many Letters of the Alphabet. Hereupon excessive debate, and a learned sharp-shooting, with victory-shouts on both sides; into which we nowise enter. Some touch of human sympathy does draw us towards Hinrek, whom, if he was once a real man, with bones and sinews, stomach and provender-scrip, it is mournful to see evaporated away into mere vowels and consonants: however, beyond a kind wish, we can give him no help. In Literary History, except on this one occasion, as seems indisputable enough, he is nowhere mentioned or hinted at.

Leaving Hinrek and Nicolaus, then, to fight out their quarrel as they may, we remark that the clearest issue of it would throw little light on the origin of *Reinecke*. The victor could at most claim to be the first German redactor of this Fable, and the happiest; whose work had superseded and obliterated all preceding ones whatsoever; but nowise to be the inventor thereof, who must be sought for in a much remoter period. There are even two printed versions of the Tale, prior in date to this of Lübeck: a Dutch one, at Delft in 1484; and one by Caxton in English, in 1481, which seems to be the earliest of all.* These two differ essentially from

* Caxton's Edition, a copy of which is in the British Museum, bears title: *Hystorye of Reynart the Foxe;* and begins thus:

Hinrek's; still more so does the French *Roman du nouveau Renard,* composed 'by Jacquemars Gielée at Lisle about the year 1290,' which yet exists in manuscript: however, they sufficiently verify that statement, by some supposed to be feigned, of the German redactor's having 'sought and rendered' his work from the Walloon and French; in which latter tongue, as we shall soon see, some shadow of it had been known and popular, long centuries before that time. For besides Gielée's work, we have a *Renard Couronné* of still earlier, a *Renard Contrefait* of somewhat later date: and Chroniclers inform us that, at the noted Festival given by Philip the Fair, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, among the dramatic entertainments, was a whole Life of Reynard; wherein it must not surprise us that he 'ended by becoming Pope, and still, under the Tiara, 'continued to eat poultry.' Nay, curious inquirers have discovered, on the French and German borders, some vestige of the Story even in Carlovingian times; which, indeed, again makes it a German original: they will have it that a certain Reinhard, or Reinecke, Duke of Lorraine, who, in the ninth century, by his craft and

'It was aboute the tyme of Pentecoste or Whytsontyde that the 'wodes comynly be lusty and gladsome, and the trees clad with 'levys and blossoms, and the grounds with herbes and flowers 'sweete smellyng;'—where, as in many other passages, the fact that Caxton and Alkmer had the same original before them is manifest enough. Our venerable Printer says in conclusion: 'I have 'not added ne mynnsshed but have followed as nyghe as I can my 'copye whych was in dutche; and by me Willm Caxton translated 'in to this rude and symple englyssh in thabbey of Westminster, 'and fynnyshed the vi daye of Juyn the yere of our lord 1481, the '21 yere of the regne of Kynge Edward the iiijth.'

exhaustless stratagems worked strange mischief in that region, many times overreaching King Zwentibald himself, and at last, in his stronghold of Durfos, proving impregnable to him, — had in satirical songs of that period been celebrated as a *fox*, as *Reinhard the Fox*, and so given rise afar off to this Apologue, at least to the title of it. The name *Isegrim*, as applied to the Wolf, these same speculators deduce from an Austrian Count Isengrin, who, in those old days, had revolted against Kaiser Arnulph, and otherwise exhibited too wolfish a disposition. Certain it is, at least, that both designations were in universal use during the twelfth century; they occur, for example, in one of the two *sirventes* which our Cœur-de-Lion has left us: 'Ye have promised me fidelity,' says he, 'but ye have kept it as the Wolf did to the Fox,' as *Isangrin* did to *Reinhart*.* Nay, perhaps the ancient circulation of some such Song, or Tale, among the French, is best of all evinced by the fact that this same *Reinhart*, or *Renard*, is still the only word in their language for *Fox*; and thus, strangely enough, the Proper may have become an Appellative; and sly Duke Reinhart, at an era when the French tongue was first evolving itself from the rubbish of Latin and German, have insinuated his name into Natural as well as Political History.

From all which, so much at least would appear: That the Fable of *Reynard the Fox*, which in the German version we behold completed, nowise derived its completeness from the individual there named Hinrek van

* Flögel (iii. 31), who quotes the *Histoire Littéraire des Troubadours*, t. i. p. 63.

Alkmer, or from any other individual, or people; but rather, that being in old times universally current, it was taken up by poets and satirists of all countries; from each received some accession or improvement; and properly has no single author. We must observe, however, that as yet it had attained no fixation or consistency; no version was decidedly preferred to every other. Caxton's and the Dutch appear, at best, but as the skeleton of what afterwards became a body; of the old Walloon version, said to have been discovered lately, we are taught to entertain a similar opinion:* in the existing French versions, which are all older, either in Gielée's, or in the others, there is even less analogy. Loosely conjoined, therefore, and only in the state of dry bones, was it that Hinrek, or Nicolaus, or some Lower-Saxon whoever he might be, found the story; and blowing on it with the breath of genius, raised it up into a consistent Fable. Many additions and some exclusions he must have made; was probably enough assisted by personal experience of a Court, whether that of Juliers or some other; perhaps also he admitted personal allusions, and doubtless many an oblique glance at existing things: and thus was produced the Low-German *Reineke de Fos;* which version, shortly after its appearance, had extinguished all the rest, and come to be, what it still is, the sole veritable representative of *Reynard,* inasmuch as all subsequent translations and editions have derived themselves from it.

The farther history of *Reinecke* is easily traced. In

* See Scheller: *Reineke de Fos, To Brunswyk,* 1825; *Vorrede.*

this new guise, it spread abroad over all the world, with a scarcely exampled rapidity; fixing itself also as a firm possession in most countries, where, indeed, in this character, we still find it. It was printed and rendered, innumerable times: in the original dialect alone, the last Editor has reckoned up more than twenty Editions; on one of which, for example, we find such a name as that of Heinrich Voss. It was first translated into High-German in 1545; into Latin in 1567, by Hartmann Schopper, whose smooth style and rough fortune keep him in memory with Scholars: * a new version into

* While engaged in this Translation, at Freiburg in Baden, he was impressed as a soldier, and carried, apparently in fetters, to Vienna, having given his work to another to finish. At Vienna he stood not long in the ranks; having fallen violently sick, and being thrown out into the streets to recover there. He says, 'he 'was without bed, and had to seek quarters on the muddy pave-'ment, in a Barrel.' Here too, in the night, some excessively straitened individual stole from him his cloak and sabre. However, men were not all hyænas: one Josias Hufnagel, unknown to him, but to whom by his writings he was known, took him under roof, procured medical assistance, equipped him anew; so that 'in the 'harvest-season, being half-cured, he could return or rather re-'crawl to Frankfort on the Mayn.' There too 'a Magister Johann Cuipius, Christian Egenolph's son-in-law, kindly received him,' and encouraged him to finish his Translation; as accordingly he did, dedicating it to the Emperor, with doleful complaints, fruitless or not is unknown. For now poor Hartmann, no longer an Autobiographer, quite vanishes, and we can understand only that he laid his wearied back one day in a most still bed, where the blanket of the Night softly enwrapped him and all his woes.——His Book is entitled *Opus poeticum de admirabili Fallaciâ et Astutiâ Vulpeculæ Reinekes*, &c. &c.; and in the Dedication and Preface contains all these details.

short German verse appeared next century; in our own times, Goethe has not disdained to reproduce it, by means of his own, in a third shape: Of Soltau's version, into literal doggerel, we have already testified. Long generations before, it had been manufactured into Prose, for the use of the people, and was sold on stalls; where still, with the needful changes in spelling, and printed on grayest paper, it tempts the speculative eye.

Thus has our old Fable, rising like some River in the remote distance, from obscure rivulets, gathered strength out of every valley, out of every country, as it rolled on. It is European in two senses; for as all Europe contributed to it, so all Europe has enjoyed it. Among the Germans, *Reinecke Fuchs* was long a House-book and universal Best-companion: it has been lectured on in Universities, quoted in Imperial Council-halls; it lay on the toilette of Princesses, and was thumbed to pieces on the bench of the Artisan; we hear of grave men ranking it only next to the Bible. Neither, as we said, was its popularity confined to home; Translations ere long appeared in French, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Dutch, English:* nor was that same stall-honour, which

* Besides Caxton's original, of which little is known among us but the name, we have two versions; one in 1667, 'with excellent Morals and Expositions,' which was reprinted in 1681, and followed in 1684 by a Continuation, called the *Shifts of Reynardine the son of Reynard*, of English growth; another in 1708, slightly altered from the former, explaining what appears doubtful or allegorical; 'it being originally written,' says the brave editor elsewhere, 'by an eminent Statesman of the German Empire, to shew 'some Men their Follies, and correct the Vices of the Times he 'lived in.' Not only *Reynardine* but a second Appendix, *Cawood*

has been reckoned the truest literary celebrity, refused it here; perhaps many a reader of these pages may, like the writer of them, recollect the hours, when, hidden from unfeeling gaze of pedagogue, he swallowed *The most pleasant and delightful History of Reynard the Fox*, like stolen waters, with a timorous joy.

So much for the outward fortunes of this remarkable Book. It comes before us with a character such as can belong only to a very few; that of being a true World's-Book, which through centuries was everywhere at home, the spirit of which diffused itself into all languages and all minds. These quaint Æsopic figures have painted themselves in innumerable heads; that rough, deep-lying humour has been the laughter of many generations. So that, at worst, we must regard this *Reinecke* as an ancient Idol, once worshipped, and still interesting for that circumstance, were the sculpture never so rude. We can love it, moreover, as being indigenous, wholly of our own creation: it sprang up from European sense and character, and was a faithful type and organ of these.

But independently of all extrinsic considerations, this Fable of *Reinecke* may challenge a judgment on its own merits. Cunningly constructed, and not without a true poetic life, we must admit it to be: great power of conception and invention, great pictorial fidelity, a warm, sunny tone of colouring, are manifest enough. It is full of broad rustic mirth; inexhaustible in comic

---

the Rook, appears here; also there are 'curious Devices, or Pictures.'—Of Editions 'printed for the Flying-Stationers,' we say nothing.

devices; a World-Saturnalia, where Wolves tonsured into Monks, and nigh starved by short commons, Foxes pilgriming to Rome for absolution, Cocks pleading at the judgment-bar, make strange mummery. Nor is this wild Parody of Human Life without its meaning and moral: it is an air-pageant from Fancy's dream-grotto, yet wisdom lurks in it; as we gaze, the vision becomes poetic and prophetic. A true Irony must have dwelt in the Poet's heart and head; here, under grotesque shadows, he gives us the saddest picture of Reality; yet for us without sadness; his figures mask themselves in uncouth, beastial vizards, and enact, gambolling; their Tragedy dissolves into sardonic grins. He has a deep, heartfelt Humour, sporting with the world and its evils in kind mockery: this is the poetic *soul*, round which the outward *material* has fashioned itself into living coherence. And so, in that rude old Apologue, we have still a mirror, though now tarnished and timeworn, of true magic reality; and can discern there, in cunning reflex, some image both of our destiny and of our duty: for now, as then, Prudence is the only virtue sure of its reward, and Cunning triumphs where Honesty is worsted; and now, as then, it is the wise man's part to know this, and cheerfully look for it, and cheerfully defy it:

Ut vulpis adulatio
Here through his own world moveth,
Sic hominis et ratio
Most like to Reynard's proveth.*

---

* *Ut vulpis adulatio*
Nu in de werlde blikket:
Sic hominis et ratio
Gelyk dem Fos sik shikket.—Motto to *Reineke.*

If *Reinecke* is nowise a perfect Comic Epos, it has various features of such, and, above all, a genuine Epic spirit, which is the rarest feature.

Of the Fable, and its incidents and structure, it is perhaps superfluous to offer any sketch; to most readers the whole may be already familiar. How Noble, King of the Beasts, holding a solemn Court, one Whitsuntide, is deafened on all hands with complaints against Reinecke; Hinze the Cat, Lampe the Hare, Isegrim the Wolf, with innumerable others, having suffered from his villany, Isegrim especially, in a point which most keenly touches honour; nay Chanticleer the Cock (*Henning de Hane*), amid bitterest wail, appearing even with the *corpus delicti*, the body of one of his children, whom that arch-knave has feloniously murdered with intent to eat. How his indignant Majesty thereupon despatches Bruin the Bear to cite the delinquent in the King's name; how Bruin, inveigled into a Honey-expedition, returns without his errand, without his ears, almost without his life; Hinze the Cat, in a subsequent expedition, faring no better. How at last Reinecke, that he may not have to stand actual siege in his fortress of Malapertus, does appear for trial, and is about to be hanged, but on the gallows-ladder makes a speech unrivalled in forensic eloquence, and saves his life; nay, having incidentally hinted at some Treasures, the hiding-place of which is well known to him, rises into high favour; is permitted to depart on that pious pilgrimage to Rome he has so much at heart, and furnished even with shoes, cut from the living hides of Isegrim and Isegrim's much-injured spouse, his worst enemies. How, the Treasures not making their appearance, but only new misdeeds, he is

again haled to judgment; again glozes the general ear with sweetest speeches; at length, being challenged to it, fights Isegrim in knightly tourney, and by the cunningest, though the most unchivalrous method, not to be farther specified in polite writing, carries off a complete victory; and having thus, by wager of battle, manifested his innocence, is overloaded with royal favour; created Chancellor, and Pilot to weather the Storm; and so, in universal honour and authority, reaps the fair fruit of his gifts and labours.

Whereby shall each to wisdom turn,
Evil eschew, and virtue learn,
Therefore was this same story wrote,
That is its aim, and other not.
This Book for little price is sold,
But image clear of world doth hold;
Whoso into the world would look,
My counsel is,—he buy this book.
So endeth Reynard Fox's story:
God help us all to heavenly glory!

It has been objected that the Animals in *Reinecke* are not Animals, but Men disguised; to which objection, except in so far as grounded on the necessary indubitable fact that this is an Apologue or emblematic Fable, and no Chapter of Natural History, we cannot in any considerable degree accede. Nay, that very contrast between Object and Effort, where the Passions of men develop themselves on the Interests of animals, and the whole is huddled together in chaotic mockery, is a main charm of the picture. For the rest, we should rather say, these bestial characters were moderately well sustained: the vehement, futile vociferation of Chanticleer;

the hysterical promptitude, and earnest profession and protestation of poor Lampe the Hare; the thickheaded ferocity of Isegrim; the sluggish, gluttonous opacity of Bruin; above all, the craft, the tact, and inexhaustible knavish adroitness of Reinecke himself, are in strict accuracy of costume. Often also their situations and occupations are bestial enough. What quantities of bacon and other proviant do Isegrim and Reinecke forage; Reinecke contributing the scheme, — for the two were then in partnership, — and Isegrim paying the shot in broken bones! What more characteristic than the fate of Bruin, when, ill-counselled, he introduces his stupid head into Rustefill's half-split log; has the wedges whisked away, and stands clutched there, as in a vice, and uselessly roaring; disappointed of honey, sure only of a beating without parallel! Not to forget the Mare, whom, addressing her by the title of Good-wife, with all politeness, Isegrim, sore-pinched with hunger, asks whether she will sell her foal: she answers, that the price is written on her hinder hoof; which document the intending purchaser, being 'an Erfurt graduate,' declares his full ability to read; but finds there no writing, or print, — save only the *print* of six horsenails on his own mauled visage. And abundance of the like; sufficient to excuse our old Epos on this head, or altogether justify it. Another objection, that, namely, which points to the great and excessive coarseness of the work here and there, it cannot so readily turn aside; being indeed rude, oldfashioned, and homespun, apt even to draggle in the mire: neither are its occasional dulness and tediousness to be denied; but only to be set against its frequent terseness and strength, and pardoned as the product of poor humanity, from whose

hands nothing, not even a *Reineke de Fos*, comes perfect.

He who would read, and still understand this old Apologue, must apply to Goethe, whose version, for poetical use, we have found infinitely the best; like some copy of an ancient, bedimmed, half-obliterated wood-cut, but new-done on steel, on India-paper, and with all manner of graceful yet appropriate appendages. Nevertheless, the old Low-German original has also a certain charm, and simply as the original, would claim some notice. It is reckoned greatly the best performance that was ever brought out in that dialect; interesting, moreover, in a philological point of view, especially to us English; being properly the language of our old Saxon Fatherland; and still curiously like our own, though the two, for some twelve centuries, have had no brotherly communication. One short specimen, with the most verbal translation, we shall here insert, and then have done with *Reinecke:*

'De Greving was Reinken broder's söne,
The Badger was Reinke's brother's son,
De sprak do, un was sêr köne.
He spake there, and was (sore) very (keen) bold.
He forantworde in dem Hove den Fos,
He (for-answered) defended in the Court the Fox,
De dog was sêr falsh un lôs.
That (though) yet was very false and loose.
He sprak to deme Wulve also fôrd:
He spake to the Wolf so forth:
Here Isegrim, it is ein ôldspräken wôrd,
Master Isegrim, it is an old-spoken word,
Des fyendes mund shaffet selden frôm!
The (fiend's) enemy's mouth (shapeth) bringeth seldom advantage!

So do ji ôk by Reinken, minem ôm.
So do ye (eke) too by Reinke, mine (eme) uncle.
Were he so wol alse ji hyr to Hove,
Were he as well as ye here at Court,
Un stunde he also in des Koninge's love,
And stood he so in the King's favour,
Here Isegrim, alse ji dôt,
Master Isegrim, as ye do,
It sholde ju nigt dünken gôd,
It should you not (think) seem good,
Dat ji en hyr alsus forspräken
That ye him here so forspake
Un de ôlden stükke hyr fôrräken.
And the old tricks here forth-raked.
Men dat kwerde, dat ji Reinken hävven gedân,
But the ill that ye Reinke have done,
Dat late ji al agter stan.
That let ye all (after stand) stand by.
It is nog etliken heren wol kund,
It is yet to some gentlemen well known,
Wo ji mid Reinken maken den ferbund,
How ye with Reinke made (bond) alliance,
Un wolden wären twe like gesellen :
And would be two (like) equal partners :
Dat mot ik dirren heren fortällen.
That mote I these gentlemen forth-tell.
Wente Reinke, myn ôm in wintersnôd,
Since Reinke, mine uncle, in winter's-need,
Umme Isegrim's willen, fylna was dôd.
For Isegrim's (will) sake, full-nigh was dead.
Wente it geshag dat ein kwam gefaren,
For it chanced that one came (faring) driving,
De hadde grote fishe up ener karen :
Who had many fishes upon a car :
Isegrim hadde geren der fishe gehaled,
Isegrim had fain the fishes (have haled) have got,

Men he hadde nigt, darmid se wörden betaled.
But he had not wherewith they should be (betold) paid.
He bragte minen ôm in de grote nôd,
He brought mine uncle into great (need) straits,
Um sinen willen ging he liggen for dôd,
For his sake went he to (lig) lie for dead,
Regt in den wäg, un stund äventur.
Right in the way, and stood (adventure) chance.
Market, worden em ôk de fishe sûr?
Mark, were him eke the fishes (sour) dear-bought?
Do jenne mid der kare gefaren kwam
When (yond) he with the car driving came
Un minen ôm darsülvest fornem,
And mine uncle (there-self) even there perceived,
Hastigen tôg he syn swërd un snel,
Hastily (took) drew he his sword and (snell) quick,
Un wolde mineme ome torrükken en fel.
And would my uncle (tatter in fell) tear in pieces.
Men he rögede sik nigt klên nog grôt;
But he stirred himself not (little nor great) more or less;
Do mênde he dat he were dôd;
Then (meaned) thought he that he was dead;
He läde ön up de kar, und dayte en to fillen,
He laid him upon the car, and thought him to skin,
Dat wagede he all dorg Isegrim's willen!
That risked he all through Isegrim's will!
Do he fordan begunde to faren,
When he forth-on began to fare,
Wärp Reinke etlike fishe fan der karen,
Cast Reinke some fishes from the car,
Isegrim fan ferne agteona kwam
Isegrim from far after came
Un derre fishe al to sik nam.
And these fishes all to himself took.
Reinke sprang wedder fan der karen;
Reinke sprang again from the car;

Em lüstede to nigt länger to faren.
Him listed not longer to fare.
He hadde ôk gêrne der fishe begërd,
He (had) would have also fain of the fishes required,
Men Isegrim hadde se alle fortêrd.
But Isegrim had them all consumed.
He hadde geten dat he wolde barsten,
He had eaten so that he would burst,
Un moste darumme gên torn arsten.
And must thereby go to the doctor.
Do Isegrim der graden nigt en mogte,
As Isegrim the fish-bones not liked,
Der sülven he em ein weinig brogte.
Of these (self) same he him a little brought.

Whereby it would appear, if we are to believe Grimbart the Badger, that Reinecke was not only the cheater in this case, but also the cheatee: however, he makes matters straight again in that other noted fish expedition, where Isegrim, minded not to steal but to catch fish, and having no fishing-tackle, by Reinecke's advice, inserts his tail into the lake, in winter-season; but before the promised string of trouts, all hooked to one another and to him, will bite,—is frozen in, and left there to his own bitter meditations.

We here take leave of *Reineke de Fos*, and of the whole Æsopic genus, of which it is almost the last, and by far the most remarkable example. The Age of Apologue, like that of Chivalry and Love-singing, is gone; for nothing in this Earth has continuance. If we ask, Where are now our People's Books? the answer might give room for reflections. Hinrek van Alkmer has passed away, and Dr. Birkbeck has risen in his room. What

good and evil lie in that little sentence!—But doubtless the day is coming when what is wanting here will be supplied; when as the Logical, so likewise the Poetical susceptibility and faculty of the people,—their Fancy, Humour, Imagination, wherein lie the main elements of spiritual life,—will no longer be left uncultivated, barren, or bearing only spontaneous thistles, but in new and finer harmony with an improved Understanding, will flourish in new vigour; and in our inward world there will again be a sunny Firmament and verdant Earth, as well as a Pantry and culinary Fire; and men will learn not only to recapitulate and compute, but to worship, to love; in tears or in laughter, hold mystical as well as logical communion with the high and the low of this wondrous Universe; and read, as they should live, with their whole being. Of which glorious consummation there is at all times, seeing these endowments are indestructible, nay essentially supreme in man, the firmest ulterior certainty, but, for the present, only faint prospects and far-off indications. Time brings Roses!

TAYLOR'S HISTORIC SURVEY OF GERMAN POETRY.*

[1831.]

GERMAN Literature has now for upwards of half a century been making some way in England; yet by no means at a constant rate, rather in capricious flux and reflux,—deluge alternating with desiccation: never would it assume such moderate, reasonable currency, as promised to be useful and lasting. The history of its progress here would illustrate the progress of more important things; would again exemplify what obstacles a new spiritual object, with its mixture of truth and of falsehood, has to encounter from unwise enemies, still more from unwise friends; how dross is mistaken for metal, and common ashes are solemnly labelled as fell poison; how long, in such cases, blind Passion must vociferate before she can awaken Judgment; in short, with what tumult, vicissitude, and protracted difficulty, a foreign doctrine adjusts and locates itself among the homeborn. Perfect ignorance is quiet, perfect knowledge is quiet; not so the transition from the former to the latter. In a vague, all-exaggerating twilight of wonder, the new has to fight its battle with the old; Hope has to settle accounts with Fear: thus the scales

* EDINBURGH REVIEW, No. 105.—Historic Survey of German Poetry, interspersed with various Translations. By W. Taylor, of Norwich. 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1830.

strangely waver; public opinion, which is as yet baseless, fluctuates without limit; periods of foolish admiration and foolish execration must elapse, before that of true inquiry and zeal according to knowledge can begin.

Thirty years ago, for example, a person of influence and understanding thought good to emit such a proclamation as the following: 'Those ladies, who take the 'lead in society, are loudly called upon to act as guar- 'dians of the public taste as well as of the public virtue. 'They are called upon, therefore, to oppose, with the 'whole weight of their influence, the irruption of those 'swarms of Publications now daily issuing from the 'banks of the Danube, which, like their ravaging pre- 'decessors of the darker ages, though with far other 'and more fatal arms, are overrunning civilised society. 'Those readers, whose purer taste has been formed on 'the correct models of the old classic school, see with 'indignation and astonishment the Huns and Vandals 'once more overpowering the Greeks and Romans. 'They behold our minds, with a retrograde but rapid 'motion, hurried back to the reign of Chaos and old 'Night, by distorted and unprincipled Compositions, 'which, in spite of strong flashes of genius, unite the 'taste of the Goths with the morals of Bagshot.'— 'The newspapers announce that Schiller's *Tragedy of 'the Robbers*, which inflamed the young nobility of 'Germany to enlist themselves into a band of high- 'waymen, to rob in the forests of Bohemia, is now 'acting in England by persons of quality!'*

* *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* By Hannah More. The Eighth Edition, p. 41.

Whether our fair Amazons, at sound of this alarm-trumpet, drew up in array of war to discomfit those invading Compositions, and snuff out the lights of that questionable private theatre, we have not learned; and see only that, if so, their campaign was fruitless and needless. Like the old Northern Immigrators, those new Paper Goths marched on resistless whither they were bound; some to honour, some to dishonour, the most to oblivion and the impalpable inane; and no weapon or artillery, not even the glances of bright eyes, but only the omnipotence of Time, could tame and assort them. Thus, Kotzebue's truculent armaments, once so threatening, all turned out to be mere Fantasms and Night-apparitions; and so rushed onwards, like some Spectre Hunt, with loud howls indeed, yet hurrying nothing into Chaos but themselves. While again, Schiller's *Tragedy of the Robbers*, which did not inflame either the young or the old nobility of Germany to rob in the forests of Bohemia, or indeed to do anything, except perhaps yawn a little less, proved equally innocuous in England, and might still be acted without offence, could living individuals, idle enough for that end, be met with here. Nay, this same Schiller, not indeed by *Robbers*, yet by *Wallensteins*, by *Maids of Orleans*, and *Wilhelm Tells*, has actually conquered for himself a fixed dominion among us, which is yearly widening; round which other German kings, of less intrinsic prowess, and of greater, are likewise erecting thrones. And yet, as we perceive, civilised society still stands in its place; and the public taste, as well as the public virtue, live on, though languidly, as before. For, in fine, it has become manifest that the old Cimmerian

Forest is now quite felled and tilled; that the true Children of Night, whom we have to dread, dwell not on the banks of the Danube, but nearer hand.

Could we take our progress in knowledge of German Literature since that diatribe was written, as any measure of our progress in the science of Criticism, above all, in the grand science of national Tolerance, there were some reason for satisfaction. With regard to Germany itself, whether we yet stand on the right footing, and know at last how we are to live in profitable neighbourhood and intercourse with that country; or whether the present is but one other of those capricious tides, which also will have its reflux, may seem doubtful: meanwhile, clearly enough, a rapidly growing favour for German Literature comes to light; which favour too is the more hopeful, as it now grounds itself on better knowledge, on direct study and judgment. Our knowledge is better, if only because more general. Within the last ten years, independent readers of German have multiplied perhaps a hundred fold; so that now this acquirement is almost expected as a natural item in liberal education. Hence, in a great number of minds, some immediate personal insight into the deeper significance of German Intellect and Art;—everywhere, at least a feeling that it has some such significance. With independent readers, moreover, the writer ceases to be independent, which of itself is a considerable step. Our British Translators, for instance, have long been unparalleled in modern literature, and, like their country, 'the envy of surrounding nations:' but now there are symptoms that, even in the remote German province, they must no longer range quite at will; that the

butchering of a *Faust* will henceforth be accounted literary homicide, and practitioners of that quality must operate on the dead subject only. While there are Klingemanns and Claurens in such abundance, let no merely ambitious, or merely hungry Interpreter, fasten on Goethes and Schillers. Remark too, with satisfaction, how the old-established British Critic now feels that it has become unsafe to speak delirium on this subject; wherefore he prudently restricts himself to one of two courses: either to acquire some understanding of it, or, which is the still surer course, altogether to hold his peace. Hence freedom from much babble that was wont to be oppressive: probably no watchhorn with such a note as that of Mrs. More's can again be sounded, by male or female Dogberry, in these Islands. Again, there is no one of our younger, more vigorous Periodicals, but has its German craftsman, gleaning what he can: we have seen Jean Paul quoted in English Newspapers. Nor, among the signs of improvement, at least of extended curiosity, let us omit our British Foreign Reviews, a sort of merchantmen that regularly visit the Continental, especially the German ports, and bring back such ware as luck yields them, with the hope of better. Last, not least among our evidences of Philo-Germanism, here is a whole *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, in three sufficient octavos; and this not merely in the eulogistic and recommendatory vein, but proceeding in the way of criticism, and indifferent, impartial narrative: a man of known character, of talent, experience, penetration, judges that the English public is prepared for such a service, and likely to reward it.

These are appearances, which, as advocates for the friendly approximation of all men and all peoples, and the readiest possible interchange of whatever each produces of advantage to the others, we must witness gladly. Free literary intercourse with other nations, what is it but an extended Freedom of the Press; a liberty to read (in spite of Ignorance, of Prejudice, which is the worst of Censors) what our foreign teachers also have printed for us? Ultimately, therefore, a liberty to speak and to hear, were it with men of all countries and of all times; to use, in utmost compass, those precious natural organs, by which not Knowledge only but mutual Affection is chiefly generated among mankind! It is a natural wish in man to know his fellow-passengers in this strange Ship, or Planet, on this strange Life-voyage: neither need his curiosity restrict itself to the cabin where he himself chances to lodge; but may extend to all accessible departments of the vessel. In all he will find mysterious beings, of Wants and Endeavours like his own; in all he will find Men; with these let him comfort and manifoldly instruct himself. As to German Literature, in particular, which professes to be not only new, but original, and rich in curious information for us; which claims, moreover, nothing that we have not granted to the French, Italian, Spanish, and in a less degree to far meaner literatures, we are gratified to see that such claims can no longer be resisted. In the present fallow state of our English Literature, when no Poet cultivates his own poetic field, but all are harnessed into Editorial teams, and ploughing in concert, for Useful Knowledge, or Bibliopolic Profit, we regard this renewal of our intercourse with poetic Ger-

many, after twenty years of languor or suspension, as among the most remarkable and even promising features of our recent intellectual history. In the absence of better tendencies, let this, which is no idle, but in some points of view a deep and earnest one, be encouraged. For ourselves, in the midst of so many louder and more exciting interests, we feel it a kind of duty to cast some glances now and then on this little stiller interest: since the matter is once for all to be inquired into, sound notions on it should be furthered, unsound ones cannot be too speedily corrected. It is on such grounds that we have taken up this *Historic Survey*.

Mr. Taylor is so considerable a person, that no Book deliberately published by him, on any subject, can be without weight. On German Poetry, such is the actual state of public information and curiosity, his guidance will be sure to lead or mislead a numerous class of inquirers. We are therefore called on to examine him with more than usual strictness and minuteness. The Press, in these times, has become so active; Literature, what is still called Literature, has so dilated in volume, and diminished in density, that the very Reviewer feels at a nonplus, and has ceased to review. Why thoughtfully examine what was written without thought; or note faults and merits, where there is neither fault nor merit? From a Nonentity, embodied, with innocent deception, in foolscap and printers' ink, and named Book; from the common wind of Talk, even when it is conserved by such mechanism, for days, in the shape of Froth,—how shall the hapless Reviewer filter aught in that once so profitable colander of his? He has ceased, as we said, to attempt the impossible,—cannot review, but only

discourse; he dismisses his too unproductive Author, generally with civil words, not to quarrel needlessly with a fellow-creature; and must try, as he best may, to grind from his own poor garner. Authors long looked with an evil, envious eye on the Reviewer, and strove often to blow out his light, which only burnt the clearer for such blasts; but now, cunningly altering their tactics, they have extinguished it by want of oil. Unless for some unforeseen change of affairs, or some new-contrived machinery, of which there is yet no trace, the trade of Reviewer is wellnigh done.

The happier are we that Mr. Taylor's Book is of the old stamp, and has substance in it for our uses. If no honour, there will be no disgrace, in having carefully examined it; which service, indeed, is due to our readers, not without curiosity in this matter, as well as to the Author. In so far as he seems a safe guide, and brings true tidings from the promised land, let us proclaim that fact, and recommend him to all pilgrims: if, on the other hand, his tidings are false, let us hasten to make this also known; that the German Canaan suffer not, in the eyes of the fainthearted, by spurious samples of its produce and reports of bloodthirsty sons of Anak dwelling there, which this harbinger and spy brings out of it. In either case, we may hope, our Author, who loves the Germans in his way, and would have his countrymen brought into closer acquaintance with them, will feel that, in purpose at least, we are co-operating with him.

First, then, be it admitted without hesitation, that Mr. Taylor, in respect of general talent and acquirement, takes his place above all our expositors of German

things; that his Book is greatly the most important we yet have on this subject. Here are upwards of fourteen hundred solid pages of commentary, narrative, and translation, submitted to the English reader; numerous statements and personages, hitherto unheard of, or vaguely heard of, stand here in fixed shape; there is, if no map of intellectual Germany, some first attempt at such. Farther, we are to state that our Author is a zealous, earnest man; no hollow dilettante hunting after shadows, and prating he knows not what; but a substantial, distinct, remarkably decisive man; has his own opinion on many subjects, and can express it adequately. We should say, precision of idea was a striking quality of his: no vague transcendentalism, or mysticism of any kind; nothing but what is measurable and tangible, and has a meaning which he that runs may read, is to be apprehended here. He is a man of much classical and other reading; of much singular reflection; stands on his own basis, quiescent yet immoveable: a certain rugged vigour of natural power, interesting even in its distortions, is everywhere manifest. Lastly, we venture to assign him the rare merit of honesty: he speaks out in plain English what is in him; seems heartily convinced of his own doctrines, and preaches them because they are his own; not for the sake of sale, but of truth; at worst, for the sake of making proselytes.

On the strength of which properties, we reckon that this *Historic Survey* may, under certain conditions, be useful and acceptable to two classes. First, to incipient students of German Literature in the original; who in any History of their subject, even in a bare catalogue, will find help; though for that class, unfortunately, Mr.

Taylor's help is much diminished in value by several circumstances; by this one, were there no other, that he nowhere cites any authority: the path he has opened may be the true or the false one; for farther researches and lateral surveys there is no direction or indication. But, secondly, we reckon that this Book may be welcome to many of the much larger miscellaneous class, who read less for any specific object than for the sake of reading; to whom any book that will, either in the way of contradiction or of confirmation, by new wisdom, or new perversion of wisdom, stir up the stagnant inner man, is a windfall; the rather if it bring some historic tidings also, fit for remembering, and repeating; above all, if, as in this case, the style with many singularities have some striking merits, and so the book be a light exercise, even an entertainment.

To such praise and utility the Work is justly entitled; but this is not all it pretends to; and more cannot without many limitations be conceded it. Unluckily the *Historic Survey* is not what it should be, but only what it would be. Our Author hastens to correct in his Preface any false hopes his Titlepage may have excited: 'A complete History of German Poetry,' it seems, 'is 'hardly within reach of his local command of library: 'so comprehensive an undertaking would require another 'residence in a country from which he has now been 'separated more than forty years:' and which various considerations render it unadvisable to revisit. Nevertheless, 'having long been in the practice of importing the productions of its fine literature,' and of working in that material, as critic, biographer, and translator, for more than one 'periodic publication of this country,' he

has now composed 'introductory and connective sections,' filled up deficiencies, retrenched superfluities; and so, collecting and remodelling those 'successive contributions,' cements them together into the 'new and entire work' here offered to the public. 'With 'fragments,' he concludes, 'long since hewn, as it 'were, and sculptured, I attempt to construct an En-'glish Temple of Fame to the memory of those German 'Poets.'

There is no doubt but a Complete History of German Poetry exceeds any local or universal command of books which a British man can at this day enjoy; and, farther, presents obstacles of an infinitely more serious character than this. A History of German, or of any national Poetry, would form, taken in its complete sense, one of the most arduous enterprises any writer could engage in. Poetry, were it the rudest, so it be sincere, is the attempt which man makes to render his existence harmonious, the utmost he can do for that end: it springs therefore from his whole feelings, opinions, activity, and takes its character from these. It may be called the music of his whole manner of being; and, historically considered, is the test how far Music, or Freedom, existed therein; how far the feeling of Love, of Beauty, and Dignity, could be elicited from that peculiar situation of his, and from the views he there had of Life and Nature, of the Universe, internal and external. Hence, in any measure to understand the Poetry, to estimate its worth, and historical meaning, we ask as a quite fundamental inquiry: What that situation was? Thus the History of a nation's Poetry is the essence of its History, political, economic, scien-

tific, religious. With all these the complete Historian of a national Poetry will be familiar; the national physiognomy, in its finest traits, and through its successive stages of growth, will be clear to him: he will discern the grand spiritual Tendency of each period, what was the highest Aim and Enthusiasm of mankind in each, and how one epoch naturally evolved itself from the other. He has to record this highest Aim of a nation, in its successive directions and developments; for by this the Poetry of the nation modulates itself, this *is* the Poetry of the nation.

Such were the primary essence of a true History of Poetry; the living principle round which all detached facts and phenomena, all separate characters of Poems and Poets, would fashion themselves into a coherent whole, if they are by any means to cohere. To accomplish such a work for any Literature would require not only all outward aids, but an excellent inward faculty: all telescopes and observatories were of no avail, without the seeing eye and the understanding heart.

Doubtless, as matters stand, such models remain in great part ideal; the stinted result of actual practice must not be too rigidly tried by them. In our language, we have yet no example of such a performance. Neither elsewhere, except perhaps in the well-meant, but altogether ineffectual, attempt of Denina, among the Italians, and in some detached, though far more successful, sketches by German writers, is there any that we know of. To expect an English History of German Literature in this style were especially unreasonable; where not only the man to write it, but the people to read and enjoy it are wanting. Some *Historic Survey*, wherein

such an ideal standard, if not attained, if not approached, might be faithfully kept in view, and endeavoured after, would suffice us. Neither need such a Survey, even as a British Surveyor might execute it, be deficient in striking objects, and views of a general interest. There is the spectacle of a great people, closely related to us in blood, language, character, advancing through fifteen centuries of culture; with the eras and changes that have distinguished the like career in other nations. Nay, perhaps, the intellectual history of the Germans is not without peculiar attraction, on two grounds: first, that they are a separate unmixed people; that in them one of the two grand stem-tribes, from which all modern European countries derive their population and speech, is seen growing up distinct, and in several particulars following its own course: secondly, that by accident and by desert, the Germans have more than once been found playing the highest part in European culture; at more than one era the grand Tendencies of Europe have first embodied themselves into action in Germany, the main battle between the New and the Old has been fought and gained there. We mention only the Swiss Revolt, and Luther's Reformation. The Germans have not indeed so many classical works to exhibit as some other nations; a Shakspeare, a Dante, has not yet been recognised among them; nevertheless, they too have had their Teachers and inspired Singers; and in regard to popular Mythology, traditionary possessions and spirit, what we may call the *inarticulate* Poetry of a nation, and what is the element of its spoken or written Poetry, they will be found superior to any other modern people.

The Historic Surveyor of German Poetry will ob-

serve a remarkable nation struggling out of Paganism; fragments of that stern Superstition, saved from the general wreck, and still, amid the new order of things, carrying back our view, in faint reflexes, into the dim primeval time. By slow degrees the chaos of the Northern Immigrations settles into a new and fairer world; arts advance; little by little, a fund of Knowledge, of Power over Nature, is accumulated for man; feeble glimmerings, even of a higher knowledge, of a poetic, break forth; till at length in the *Swabian Era*, as it is named, a blaze of true though simple Poetry bursts over Germany, more splendid, we might say, than the Troubadour Period of any other nation; for that famous *Nibelungen Song*, produced, at least ultimately fashioned in those times, and still so significant in these, is altogether without parallel elsewhere.

To this period, the essence of which was young Wonder, and an enthusiasm for which Chivalry was still the fit exponent, there succeeds, as was natural, a period of Inquiry, a Didactic period; wherein, among the Germans, as elsewhere, many a Hugo von Trimberg delivers wise saws, and moral apophthegms, to the general edification: later, a Town-clerk of Strasburg sees his *Ship of Fools* translated into all living languages, twice into Latin, and read by Kings; the Apologue of *Reynard the Fox* gathering itself together, from sources remote and near, assumes its Low-German vesture, and becomes the darling of high and low; nay still lives with us, in rude genial vigour, as one of the most remarkable indigenous productions of the Middle Ages. Nor is acted poetry of this kind wanting; the Spirit of Inquiry translates itself into Deeds which are poetical, as well as into

words: already at the opening of the fourteenth century, Germany witnesses the first assertion of political right, the first vindication of Man against Nobleman; in the early history of the German Swiss. And again, two centuries later, the first assertion of intellectual right, the first vindication of Man against Clergyman; in the history of Luther's Reformation. Meanwhile the Press has begun its incalculable task; the indigenous Fiction of the Germans, what we have called their inarticulate Poetry, issues in innumerable *Volks-Bücher* (People's-Books), the progeny and kindred of which still live in all European countries: the People have their Tragedy and their Comedy; *Tyll Eulenspiegel* shakes every diaphragm with laughter; the rudest heart quails with awe at the wild mythus of *Faust*.

With Luther, however, the Didactic Tendency has reached its poetic acme; and now we must see it assume a prosaic character, and Poetry for a long while decline. The Spirit of Inquiry, of Criticism, is pushed beyond the limits, or too exclusively cultivated: what had done so much, is supposed capable of doing all; Understanding is alone listened to, while Fancy and Imagination languish inactive, or are forcibly stifled; and all poetic culture gradually dies away. As if with the high resolute genius, and noble achievements, of its Luthers and Huttens, the genius of the country had exhausted itself, we behold generation after generation of mere Prosaists succeed these high Psalmists. Science indeed advances, practical manipulation in all kinds improves; Germany has its Copernics, Hevels, Guerickes, Keplers; later, a Leibnitz opens the path of true Logic, and teaches the mysteries of Figure and Number: but the finer Educa-

tion of mankind seems at a stand. Instead of Poetic recognition and worship, we have stolid Theologic controversy, or still shallower Freethinking; pedantry, servility, mode-hunting, every species of Idolatry and Affectation, holds sway. The World has lost its beauty, Life its infinite majesty, as if the Author of it were no longer divine: instead of admiration and creation of the True, there is at best criticism and denial of the False; to Luther there has succeeded Thomasius. In this era, so unpoetical for all Europe, Germany, torn in pieces by a Thirty Years' War, and its consequences, is pre-eminently prosaic; its few Singers are feeble echoes of foreign models little better than themselves. No Shakspeare, no Milton appears there; such, indeed, would have appeared earlier, if at all, in the current of German history: but instead, they have only at best Opitzes, Flemmings, Logaus, as we had our Queen Anne Wits; or, in their Lohensteins, Gryphs, Hoffmannswaldaus, though in inverse order, an unintentional parody of our Drydens and Lees.

Nevertheless from every moral death there is a new birth; in this wondrous course of his, man may indeed linger, but cannot retrograde or stand still. In the middle of last century, from among Parisian Erotics, rickety Sentimentalism, Court aperies, and hollow Dulness striving in all hopeless courses, we behold the giant spirit of Germany awaken as from long slumber; shake away these worthless fetters, and by its Lessings and Klopstocks, announce, in true German dialect, that the Germans also are men. Singular enough in its circumstances was this resuscitation; the work as of a 'spirit on the waters,' a movement agitating the great popular

mass; for it was favoured by no court or king: all sovereignties, even the pettiest, had abandoned their native Literature, their native language, as if to irreclaimable barbarism. The greatest king produced in Germany since Barbarossa's time, Frederick the Second, looked coldly on the native endeavour, and saw no hope but in aid from France. However, the native endeavour prospered without aid: Lessing's announcement did not die away with him, but took clearer utterance, and more inspired modulation from his followers; in whose works it now speaks, not to Germany alone, but to the whole world. The results of this last Period of German Literature are of deep significance, the depth of which is perhaps but now becoming visible. Here too, it may be, as in other cases, the Want of the Age has first taken voice and shape in Germany; that change from Negation to Affirmation, from Destruction to Re-construction, for which all thinkers in every country are now prepared, is perhaps already in action there. In the nobler Literature of the Germans, say some, lie the rudiments of a new spiritual era, which it is for this, and for succeeding generations to work out and realize. The ancient creative Inspiration, it would seem, is still possible in these ages; at a time when Scepticism, Frivolity, Sensuality, had withered Life into a sand-desert, and our gayest prospect was but the *false mirage*, and even our Byrons could utter but a death-song or despairing howl, the Moses'-wand has again struck from that Horeb refreshing streams, towards which the better spirits of all nations are hastening, if not to drink, yet wistfully and hopefully to examine. If the older Literary History of Germany has the common attractions, which in a greater

or a less degree belong to the successive epochs of other such Histories; its newer Literature, and the historical delineation of this, has an interest such as belongs to no other.

It is somewhat in this way, as appears to us, that the growth of German Poetry must be construed and represented by the historian: these are the general phenomena and vicissitudes, which, if elucidated by proper individual instances, by specimens fitly chosen, presented in natural sequence, and worked by philosophy into union, would make a valuable book; on any and all of which the observations and researches of so able an inquirer as Mr. Taylor would have been welcome. Sorry are we to declare that of all this, which constitutes the essence of anything calling itself *Historic Survey*, there is scarcely a vestige in the Book before us. The question, What is the German mind; what is the culture of the German mind; what course has Germany followed in that matter; what are its national characteristics as manifested therein? appears not to have presented itself to the Author's thought. No theorem of Germany and its intellectual progress, not even a false one, has he been at pains to construct for himself. We believe, it is impossible for the most assiduous reader to gather from these three Volumes any portraiture of the national mind of Germany, not to say in its successive phases and the historical sequence of these, but in any one phase or condition. The Work is made up of critical, biographical, bibliographical dissertations, and notices concerning this and the other individual poet; interspersed with large masses of translation; and except that all these are strung together in the order of time,

has no historical feature whatever. Many literary lives as we read, the nature of literary life in Germany, what sort of moral, economical, intellectual element it is that a German writer lives in and works in,—will nowhere manifest itself. Indeed, far from depicting Germany, scarcely on more than one or two occasions does our Author even look at it, or so much as remind us that it were capable of being depicted. On these rare occasions, too, we are treated with such philosophic insight as the following: 'The Germans are not an imitative, but they 'are a listening people: they can do nothing without 'directions, and anything with them. As soon as Gott-'sched's rules for writing German correctly had made 'their appearance, every body began to write German.' Or we have theoretic hints, resting on no basis, about some new tribunal of taste which at one time had formed itself 'in the mess-rooms of the Prussian officers!'

In a word, the 'connecting sections,' or indeed by what alchymy such a congeries could be connected into a *Historic Survey*, have not become plain to us. Considerable part of it consists of quite detached little Notices, mostly of altogether insignificant men; heaped together as separate fragments; fit, had they been unexceptionable in other respects, for a Biographical Dictionary, but nowise for a *Historic Survey*. Then we have dense masses of Translation, sometimes good, but seldom of the characteristic pieces; an entire *Iphigenia*, an entire *Nathan the Wise*; nay worse, a *Sequel to Nathan*, which when we have conscientiously struggled to peruse, the Author turns round, without any apparent smile, and tells that it is by a nameless writer, and worth nothing. Not only Mr. Taylor's own Transla-

tions, which are generally good, but contributions from a whole body of labourers in that department, are given: for example, near sixty pages, very ill rendered by a Miss Plumtre, of a *Life of Kotzebue*, concerning whom, or whose life, death or burial, there is now no curiosity extant among men. If in that 'English Temple of Fame,' with its hewn and sculptured stones, those Biographical-Dictionary fragments and fractions are so much dry *rubble-work* of whinstone, is not this quite despicable *Autobiography of Kotzebue* a rood or two of mere *turf*; which, as ready-cut, our architect, to make up measure, has packed in among his marble ashlar; whereby the whole wall will the sooner bulge? But indeed, generally speaking, symmetry is not one of his architectural rules. Thus, in volume First, we have a long story translated from a German Magazine, about certain antique Hyperborean *Baresarks*, amusing enough, but with no more reference to Germany than to England; while in return the *Nibelungen Lied* is despatched in something less than one line, and comes no more to light. Tyll Eulenspiegel, who was not an 'anonymous Satire, entitled the *Mirror of Owls*,' but a real flesh-and-blood hero of that name, whose tombstone is standing to this day near Lübeck, has some four lines for his share; *Reineke de Fos* about as many, which also are inaccurate. Again, if Wieland have his half-volume, and poor Ernst Schulze, poor Zacharias Werner, and numerous other poor men, each his chapter; Luther also has his two sentences, and is in these weighed against — Dr. Isaac Watts. Ulrich Hutten does not occur here; Hans Sachs and his Master-singers escape notice, or even do worse; the poetry of the Reformation is not alluded to. The name

of Jean Paul Friedrich Richter appears not to be known to Mr. Taylor; or, if want of rhyme was to be the test of a Prosaist, how comes Salomon Gesner here? Stranger still, Ludwig Tieck is not once mentioned; neither is Novalis; neither is Maler Müller. But why dwell on these omissions and commissions? Is not all included in this one wellnigh incredible fact, that one of the largest articles in the Book, a tenth part of the whole *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, treats of that delectable genius, August von Kotzebue?

The truth is, this *Historic Survey* has not any thing historical in it; but is a mere aggregate of Dissertations, Translations, Notices, and Notes, bound together indeed by the circumstance that they are all about German Poetry, 'about it and about it;' also by the sequence of time, and still more strongly by the Bookbinder's packthread; but by no other sufficient tie whatever. The authentic title, were not some mercantile varnish allowable in such cases, might be: 'General Jail-delivery of 'all Publications and Manuscripts, original or translated, 'composed or borrowed, on the subject of German Poe-'try; by' &c.

To such Jail-delivery, at least when it is from the prison of Mr. Taylor's Desk at Norwich, and relates to a subject in the actual predicament of German Poetry among us, we have no fundamental objection: and for the name, now that it is explained, there is nothing in a name; a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. However, even in this lower and lowest point of view, the *Historic Survey* is liable to grave objections; its worth is of no unmixed character. We mentioned that Mr. Taylor did not often cite authorities: for which

doubtless he may have his reasons. If it be not from French Prefaces, and the *Biographie Universelle*, and other the like sources, we confess ourselves altogether at a loss to divine whence any reasonable individual gathered such notices as these. Books indeed are scarce; but the most untoward situation may command Wachler's *Vorlesungen*, Horn's *Poesie und Beredsamkeit*, Meister's *Characteristiken*, Koch's *Compendium*, or some of the thousand and one compilations of that sort, numerous and accurate in German, more than in any other literature: at all events, Jördens's *Lexicon deutscher Dichter und Prosaisten*, and the world-renowned Leipzig *Conversations-Lexicon*. No one of these appears to have been in Mr. Taylor's possession;—Bouterwek alone, and him he seems to have consulted perfunctorily. A certain proportion of errors in such a work is pardonable and unavoidable: scarcely so the proportion observed here. The *Historic Survey* abounds with errors, perhaps beyond any book it has ever been our lot to review. Of these indeed, many are harmless enough: as, for instance, where we learn that Görres was born in 1804, (not in 1776); though in that case he must have published his *Shah-Nameh* at the age of three years; or where it is said that Werner's epitaph 'begs Mary Magdalene to pray for his soul,' which it does not do, if indeed any one cared what it did. Some are of a quite mysterious nature; either impregnated with a wit which continues obstinately latent, or indicating that, in spite of Railways and Newspapers, some portions of this Island are still singularly impermeable. For example: 'It '(*Götz von Berlichingen*) was admirably translated into 'English, in 1799, at Edinburgh, by *William* Scott, Ad-

'vocate; no doubt, the same person who, under the 'poetical but assumed name of *Walter*, has since become 'the most extensively popular of the British writers.'— Others again are the fruit of a more culpable ignorance; as when we hear that Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* is literally meant to be a fictitious narrative, and no genuine Biography; that his *Stella* ends quietly in Bigamy (to Mr. Taylor's satisfaction), which, however the French Translation may run, in the original it certainly does not. Mr. Taylor likewise complains that his copy of *Faust* is incomplete: so, we grieve to state, is ours. Still worse is it when speaking of distinguished men, who probably have been at pains to veil their sentiments on certain subjects, our Author takes it upon him to lift such veil, and with perfect composure pronounces this to be a Deist, that a Pantheist, that other an Atheist, often without any due foundation. It is quite erroneous, for example, to describe Schiller by any such unhappy term as that of Deist: it is very particularly erroneous to say that Goethe any where 'avows himself an Atheist,' that he 'is a Pantheist;'—indeed, that he is, was, or is like to be any *ist* to which Mr. Taylor would attach just meaning.

But on the whole, what struck us most in these errors, is their surprising number. In the way of our calling, we at first took pencil, with intent to mark such transgressions; but soon found it too appalling a task, and so laid aside our black-lead and our art (*cæstus artemque*). Happily, however, a little natural invention, assisted by some tincture of arithmetic, came to our aid. Six pages, studied for that end, we did mark; finding therein thirteen errors: the pages are 167-173 of Volume Third,

and still in our copy have their marginal stigmas, which can be vindicated before a jury of Authors. Now if 6 give 13, who sees not that 1455, the entire number of pages, will give 3152, and a fraction? Or, allowing for Translations, which are freer from errors, and for philosophical Discussions, wherein the errors are of another sort; nay, granting with a perhaps unwarranted liberality, that these six pages may yield too high an average, which we know not that they do,—may not, in round numbers, Fifteen Hundred be given as the approximate amount, not of errors, indeed, yet of mistakes and mistatements, in these three octavos?

Of errors in doctrine, false critical judgments, and all sorts of philosophical hallucination, the number, more difficult to ascertain, is also unfortunately great. Considered, indeed, as in any measure a picture of what is remarkable in German Poetry, this *Historic Survey* is one great Error. We have to object to Mr. Taylor on all grounds; that his views are often partial and inadequate, sometimes quite false and imaginary; that the highest productions of German Literature, those works in which properly its characteristic and chief worth lie, are still as a sealed book to him; or, what is worse, an open book that he will not read, but pronounces to be filled with blank paper. From a man of such intellectual vigour, who has studied his subject so long, we should not have expected such a failure.

Perhaps the main principle of it may be stated, if not accounted for, in this one circumstance, that the *Historic Survey*, like its Author, stands separated from Germany by 'more than forty years.' During this time Germany has been making unexampled progress; while our Author

has either advanced in the other direction, or continued quite stationary. Forty years, it is true, make no difference in a classical Poem; yet much in the readers of that Poem, and its position towards these. Forty years are but a small period in some Histories, but in the history of German Literature, the most rapidly extending, incessantly fluctuating object even in the spiritual world, they make a great period. In Germany, within these forty years, how much has been united, how much has fallen asunder! Kant has superseded Wolf; Fichte, Kant; Schelling, Fichte; and now, it seems, Hegel is bent on superseding Schelling. Baumgarten has given place to Schlegel; the *Deutsche Bibliothek* to the Berlin *Hermes*: Lessing still towers in the distance like an Earthborn Atlas; but in the poetical Heaven, Wieland and Klopstock burn fainter, as new and more radiant luminaries have arisen. Within the last forty years, German Literature has become national, idiomatic, distinct from all others; by its productions during that period, it is either something or nothing.

Nevertheless it is still at the distance of forty years, sometimes we think it must be fifty, that Mr. Taylor stands. 'The fine Literature of Germany,' no doubt he has 'imported;' yet only with the eyes of 1780 does he read it. Thus Sulzer's *Universal Theory* continues still to be his roadbook to the temple of German taste; almost as if the German critic should undertake to measure *Waverley* and *Manfred* by the scale of Blair's *Lectures*. Sulzer was an estimable man, who did good service in his day; but about forty years ago, sank into a repose, from which it would now be impossible to rouse him. The superannuation of Sulzer appears not once to be suspected by our Author; as indeed little of

all the great work that has been done or undone Literary Germany, within that period, has become clea to him. The far-famed *Xenien* of Schiller's *Musen almanach* are once mentioned, in some half-dozen lines, wherein also there are more than half-a-dozen inaccuracies, and one rather egregious error. Of the results that followed from these *Xenien*; of Tieck, Wackenroder, the two Schlegels, and Novalis, whose critical Union, and its works, filled all Germany with tumult, discussion, and at length with new conviction; no whisper transpires here. The *New School*, with all that it taught, untaught, and mistaught, is not so much as alluded to. Schiller and Goethe, with all the poetic world they created, remain invisible, or dimly seen: Kant is a sort of Political Reformer. It must be stated with all distinctness, that of the newer and higher German Literature, no reader will obtain the smallest understanding from these Volumes.

Indeed, quite apart from his inacquaintance with actual Germany, there is that in the structure or habit of Mr. Taylor's mind, which singularly unfits him for judging of such matters well. We must complain that he reads German Poetry, from first to last, with English eyes; will not accommodate himself to the spirit of the Literature he is investigating, and do his utmost, by loving endeavour, to win its secret from it; but plunges in headlong, and silently assuming that all this was written for him and for his objects, makes short work with it, and innumerable false conclusions. It is sad to see an honest traveller confidently gauging all foreign objects with a measure that will not mete them; trying German Sacred Oaks by their fitness for British ship-

lding; walking from Dan to Beersheba, and finding little that he did not bring with him. This, we are o well aware, is the commonest of all errors, both ith vulgar readers, and with vulgar critics; but from Mr. Taylor we had expected something better; nay, let us confess, he himself now and then seems to attempt something better, but too imperfectly succeeds in it.

The truth is, Mr. Taylor, though a man of talent, as we have often admitted, and as the world well knows, though a downright, independent, and to all appearance most praiseworthy man, is one of the most peculiar critics to be found in our times. As we construe him from these Volumes, the basis of his nature seems to be Polemical; his whole view of the world, of its Poetry, and whatever else it holds, has a militant character. According to this philosophy, the whole duty of man, it would almost appear, is to lay aside the opinion of his grandfather. Doubtless, it is natural, it is indispensable, for a man to lay aside the opinion of his grandfather, when it will no longer hold together on him; but we had imagined that the great and infinitely harder duty was: To turn the opinion that does hold together to some account. However, it is not in receiving the New, and creating good with it, but solely in pulling to pieces the Old, that Mr. Taylor will have us employed. Often, in the course of these pages, might the British reader sorrowfully exclaim: "Alas! is this the year of grace 1831, and are we still *here?* Armed with the hatchet and tinder-box; still no symptom of the sower's-sheet and plough?" These latter, for our Author, are implements of the dark ages; the ground is full of thistles and jungle; cut down and spare not. A sin-

gular aversion to Priests, something like a natural hor[illegible] and hydrophobia, gives him no rest night nor day; the gist of all his speculations is to drive down more or less effectual palisades against that class of persons; nothing that he does but they interfere with or threaten; the first question he asks of every passer-by, be it German Poet, Philosopher, Farce-writer, is: "Arian or Trinitarian? Wilt thou help me or not?" Long as he has now laboured, and though calling himself Philosopher, Mr. Taylor has not yet succeeded in sweeping his arena clear; but still painfully struggles in the questions of Naturalism and Supernaturalism, Liberalism and Servilism.

Agitated by this zeal, with its fitful hope and fear, it is that he goes through Germany; scenting out Infidelity with the nose of an ancient Heresy-hunter, though for opposite purposes; and, like a recruiting sergeant, beating aloud for recruits; nay, where in any corner he can spy a tall man, clutching at him, to crimp him or impress him. Goethe's and Schiller's creed we saw specified above; those of Lessing and Herder are scarcely less edifying; but take rather this sagacious exposition of Kant's Philosophy:

'The Alexandrian writings do not differ so widely as is commonly apprehended from those of the Königsberg School; for they abound with passages, which, while they seem to flatter the popular credulity, resolve into allegory the stories of the gods, and into an illustrative personification the soul of the world; thus insinuating, to the more alert and penetrating, the speculative rejection of opinions with which they are encouraged and commanded in action to comply. With analogous spirit, Professor Kant studiously introduces a distinction between Practical and Theoretical Reason; and while

he teaches that rational conduct will indulge the hypothesis of a God, a revelation, and a future state (this, we presume, is meant by calling them *inferences of Practical Reason*), he pretends that Theoretical Reason can adduce no one satisfactory argument in their behalf: so that his morality amounts to a defence of the old adage, "Think with the wise, and act with the vulgar;" a plan of behaviour which secures to the vulgar an ultimate victory over the wise. * * Philosophy is to be withdrawn within a narrower circle of the initiated; and these must be induced to conspire in favouring a vulgar superstition. This can best be accomplished by enveloping with enigmatic jargon the topics of discussion; by employing a cloudy phraseology, which may intercept from below the war-whoop of impiety, and from above the evulgation of infidelity; by contriving a kind of "cipher of illuminism," in which public discussions of the most critical nature can be carried on from the press, without alarming the prejudices of the people, or exciting the precautions of the magistrate. Such a cipher, in the hands of an adept, is the dialect of Kant. Add to this, the notorious Gallicanism of his opinions, which must endear him to the patriotism of the philosophers of the Lyceum; and it will appear probable that the reception of his forms of syllogizing should extend from Germany to France; should completely and exclusively establish itself on the Continent; entomb with the Reasonings the Reason of the modern world; and form the tasteless fretwork which seems about to convert the halls of liberal Philosophy into churches of mystical Supernaturalism.'

These are indeed fearful symptoms, and enough to quicken the diligence of any recruiting officer that has the good cause at heart. Reasonably may such officer, beleagured with 'witchcraft and demonology, trinitarianism, intolerance,' and a considerable list of *et-ceteras*,

and still seeing no hearty followers of his flag, but a mere Falstaff regiment, smite upon his thigh, and, in moments of despondency, lament that Christianity had ever entered, or, as we here have it, 'intruded' into Europe at all; that, at least, some small slip of heathendom, 'Scandinavia, for instance,' had not been 'left 'to its natural course, unmisguided by ecclesiastical 'missionaries and monastic institutions. Many super-'stitions, which have fatigued the credulity, clouded 'the intellect, and impaired the security of man, and 'which, alas! but too naturally followed in the train of the 'Sacred Books, would there, perhaps, never have struck 'root; and in one corner of the world, the inquiries of 'reason might have found an earlier asylum, and as-'serted a less circumscribed range.' Nevertheless, there is still hope, preponderating hope. 'The general tendency of the German school,' it would appear, could we but believe such tidings, 'is to teach French opinions in English forms.' Philosophy can now look down with some approving glances on Socinianism. Nay, the literature of Germany, 'very liberal and tolerant,' is gradually overflowing, even into the Slavonian nations, 'and will found, in new languages 'and climates, those latest inferences of a corrupt but 'instructed refinement, which are likely to rebuild the 'morality of the Ancients on the ruins of Christian 'Puritanism.'

Such retrospections and prospections bring to mind an absurd rumour which, confounding our Author with his namesake, the celebrated Translator of Plato and Aristotle, represented him as being engaged in the repair and re-establishment of the Pagan Religion. For such

rumour, we are happy to state, there is not, and was not, the slightest foundation. Wieland may, indeed, at one time, have put some whims into his disciple's head; but Mr. Taylor is too solid a man to embark in speculations of that nature. Prophetic daydreams are not practical projects; at all events, as we here see, it is not the old Pagan gods that we are to bring back, but only the ancient Pagan morality, a refined and reformed Paganism;—as some middle-aged householder, if distressed by tax-gatherers and duns, might resolve on becoming thirteen again, and a bird-nesting schoolboy. Let no timid layman apprehend any overflow of priests from Mr. Taylor, or even of gods. Is not this commentary on the hitherto so inexplicable conversion of Friedrich Leopold Count Stolberg, enough to quiet every alarmist?

'On the Continent of Europe, the gentleman, and Frederic Leopold was emphatically so, is seldom brought up with much solicitude for any positive doctrine: among the Catholics, the moralist insists on the duty of conforming to the religion of one's ancestors; among the Protestants, on the duty of conforming to the religion of the magistrate; but Frederic Leopold seems to have invented a new point of honour, and a most rational one, the duty of conforming to the religion of one's father-in-law.

'A young man is the happier, while single, for being unencumbered with any religious restraints; but when the time comes for submitting to matrimony, he will find the precedent of Frederic Leopold well entitled to consideration. A predisposition to conform to the religion of the father-in-law facilitates advantageous matrimonial connexions; it produces in a family the desirable harmony of religious profession; it secures the sincere education of the daughters in the

faith of their mother; and it leaves the young men at liberty to apostatize in their turn, to exert their right of private judgment, and to choose a worship for themselves. Religion, if a blemish in the male, is surely a grace in the female sex: courage of mind may tend to acknowledge nothing above itself; but timidity is ever disposed to look upwards for protection, for consolation, and for happiness.'

With regard to this latter point, whether Religion is 'a blemish in the male, and surely a grace in the female 'sex,' it is possible judgments may remain suspended: Courage of mind, indeed, will prompt the squirrel to set itself in posture against an armed horseman; yet whether for men and women, who seem to stand, not only under the Galaxy and Stellar system, and under Immensity and Eternity, but even under any bare bodkin or drop of prussic acid, 'such courage of mind as may tend to ac-'knowledge nothing above itself,' were ornamental or the contrary; whether, lastly, religion is grounded on Fear, or on something infinitely higher and inconsistent with Fear,—may be questions. But they are of a kind we are not at present called to meddle with.

Mr. Taylor promulgates many other strange articles of faith, for he is a positive man, and has a certain quiet wilfulness; these, however, cannot henceforth much surprise us. He still calls the Middle Ages, during which nearly all the inventions and social institutions, whereby we yet live as civilized men, were originated or perfected, 'a Millennium of Darkness;' on the faith chiefly of certain long-past Pedants, who reckoned every thing barren, because Chrysoloras had not yet come, and no Greek Roots grew there. Again, turning in the other direction, he criticizes Luther's Reformation, and

repeats that old, and indeed quite foolish story of the Augustine Monk's having a merely commercial grudge against the Dominican; computes the quantity of blood shed for Protestantism; and, forgetting that men shed blood in all ages, for any cause, and for no cause, for Sansculottism, for Bonapartism, thinks that, on the whole, the Reformation was an error and failure. Pity that Providence (as King Alphonso wished in the Astronomical case) had not created its man three centuries sooner, and taken a little counsel from him! On the other hand, 'Voltaire's Reformation' was successful; and here, for once, Providence was right. Will Mr. Taylor mention what it was that Voltaire *reformed*? Many things he *de*-formed, deservedly and undeservedly, but the thing that he *formed* or *re*-formed is still unknown to the world.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add, that Mr. Taylor's whole Philosophy is sensual; that is, he recognises nothing that cannot be weighed, measured, and, with one or the other organ, eaten and digested. Logic is his only lamp of life; where this fails, the region of Creation terminates. For him there is no Invisible, Incomprehensible; whosoever, under any name, believes in an Invisible, he treats, with leniency and the loftiest tolerance, as a mystic and lunatic; and if the unhappy crackbrain has any handicraft, literary or other, allows him to go at large, and work at it. Withal he is a great-hearted, strong-minded, and, in many points, interesting man. There is a majestic composure in the attitude he has assumed; massive, immovable, uncomplaining, he sits in a world of Delirium; and for his Future looks with sure faith,—only in the direction of the Past. We

take him to be a man of sociable turn, not without kindness; at all events of the most perfect courtesy. He despises the entire Universe, yet speaks respectfully of Translators from the German, and always says that they 'english beautifully.' A certain mild Dogmatism sits well on him; peaceable, incontrovertible, uttering the palpably absurd as if it were a mere truism. On the other hand, there are touches of a grave, scientific obscenity, which are questionable. This word Obscenity we use with reference to our readers, and might also add Profanity, but not with reference to Mr. Taylor; he, as we said, is scientific merely; and where there is no *cænum* and no *fanum*, there can be no obscenity and no profanity.

To a German we might have compressed all this long description into a single word: Mr. Taylor is simply what they call a *Philister*; every fibre of him is Philistine. With us such men usually take into Politics, and become Code-makers and Utilitarians: it was only in Germany that they ever meddled much with Literature; and there worthy Nicolai has long since terminated his Jesuit-hunt; no Adelung now writes books, *Ueber die Nützlichkeit der Empfindung* (On the Utility of Feeling). Singular enough, now, when that old species had been quite extinct for almost half a century in their own land, appears a natural-born English Philistine, made in all points as they were. With wondering welcome we hail the Strongboned; almost as we might a resuscitated Mammoth. Let no David choose smooth stones from the brook to sling at him: is he not our own Goliath, whose limbs were made in England, whose thews and sinews any soil might be proud of? Is he not, as we

said, a man that can stand on his own legs without collapsing when left by himself? In these days, one of the greatest rarities, almost prodigies.

We cheerfully acquitted Mr. Taylor of Religion; but must expect less gratitude when we farther deny him any feeling for true Poetry, as indeed the feelings for Religion and for Poetry of this sort are one and the same. Of Poetry Mr. Taylor knows well what will make a grand, especially a large, *picture* in the imagination: he has even a creative gift of this kind himself, as his style will often testify; but much more he does not know. How indeed should he? Nicolai, too, 'judged 'of Poetry as he did of Brunswick Mum, simply by '*tasting* it.' Mr. Taylor assumes, as a fact known to all thinking creatures, that Poetry is neither more nor less than 'a stimulant.' Perhaps above five hundred times in the *Historic Survey* we see this doctrine expressly acted on. Whether the piece to be judged of is a Poetical Whole, and has what the critics have named a genial life, and what that life is, he inquires not; but, at best, whether it is a Logical Whole, and for most part, simply, whether it is stimulant. The praise is, that it has fine situations, striking scenes, agonizing scenes, harrows his feelings, and the like. Schiller's *Robbers* he finds to be stimulant; his *Maid of Orleans* is not stimulant, but 'among the weakest of his tragedies, and composed apparently in ill health.' The author of *Pizarro* is supremely stimulant; he of *Torquato Tasso* is 'too quotidian to be stimulant.' We had understood that alcohol was stimulant in all its shapes; opium also, tobacco, and indeed the whole class of narcotics; but heretofore found Poetry in none of the

Pharmacopœias. Nevertheless, it is edifying to observe with what fearless consistency Mr. Taylor, who is no half-man, carries through this theory of stimulation. It lies privily in the heart of many a reader and reviewer; nay, Schiller, at one time, said that 'Molière's old 'woman seemed to have become sole Editress of all 'Reviews;' but seldom, in the history of Literature, has she had the honesty to unveil, and ride triumphant, as in these Volumes. Mr. Taylor discovers that the only Poet to be classed with Homer is Tasso; that Shakspeare's Tragedies are cousins-german to those of Otway; that poor moaning, monotonous Macpherson is an epic poet. Lastly, he runs a laboured parallel between Schiller, Goethe, and Kotzebue; one is more this, the other more that; one strives hither, the other thither, through the whole string of critical predicables; almost as if we should compare scientifically Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the *Prophecies of Isaiah*, and Mat Lewis's *Tales of Terror*.

Such is Mr. Taylor; a strong-hearted oak, but in an unkindly soil, and beat upon from infancy by Trinitarian and Tory Southwesters: such is the result which native vigour, wind-storms, and thirsty mould have made out among them; grim boughs dishevelled in multangular complexity, and of the stiffness of brass; a tree crooked every way, unwedgeable and gnarled. What bandages or cordages of ours, or of man's, could straighten it, now that it has grown there for half a century? We simply point out that there is excellent tough *knee-timber* in it, and of straight timber little or none.

In fact, taking Mr. Taylor as he is and must be, and keeping a perpetual account and protest with him

on these peculiarities of his, we find that on various parts of his subject he has profitable things to say. The Göttingen group of Poets, 'Bürger and his set,' such as they were, are pleasantly delineated. The like may be said of the somewhat earlier Swiss brotherhood, whereof Bodmer and Breitinger are the central figures; though worthy wonderful Lavater, the wandering Physiognomist and Evangelist, and Protestant Pope, should not have been first forgotten, and then crammed into an insignificant paragraph. Lessing, again, is but poorly managed; his main performance, as was natural, reckoned to be the writing of *Nathan the Wise*; we have no original portrait here, but a pantagraphical reduced copy of some foreign sketches or scratches; quite unworthy of such a man, in such a historical position, standing on the confines of Light and Darkness, like Day on the misty mountain tops. Of Herder also there is much omitted; the *Geschichte der Menscheit* scarcely alluded to; yet some features are given, accurately and even beautifully. A slow-rolling grandiloquence is in Mr. Taylor's best passages, of which this is one: if no poetic light, he has occasionally a glow of true rhetorical heat. Wieland is lovingly painted, yet on the whole faithfully, as he looked some fifty years ago, if not as he now looks: this is the longest article in the *Historic Survey*, and much too long; those Paganizing *Dialogues* in particular had never much worth, and at present have scarcely any.

Perhaps the best of all these Essays is that on Klopstock. The sphere of Klopstock's genius does not transcend Mr. Taylor's scale of poetic altitudes; though it perhaps reaches the highest grade there; the 'stimu-

lant' theory recedes into the background; indeed there is a rhetorical amplitude and brilliancy in the *Messias*, which elicits in our critic an instinct truer than his philosophy is. He has honestly studied the *Messias*, and presents a clear outline of it; neither has the still purer spirit of Klopstock's *Odes* escaped him. We have English Biographies of Klopstock, and a miserable Version of his great Work; but perhaps there is no writing in our language that offers so correct an emblem of him as this analysis. Of the *Odes* we shall here present one, in Mr. Taylor's translation, which, though in prose, the reader will not fail to approve of. It is, perhaps, the finest passage in this whole *Historic Survey*.

'THE TWO MUSES.

'I saw—tell me, was I beholding what now happens, or was I beholding futurity?—I saw with the Muse of Britain the Muse of Germany engaged in competitory race,—flying warm to the goal of coronation.

'Two goals, where the prospect terminates, bordered the career: Oaks of the forest shaded the one; near to the other waved Palms in the evening shadow.

'Accustomed to contest, stepped she from Albion proudly into the arena; as she stepped, when, with the Grecian Muse and with her from the Capitol, she entered the lists.

'She beheld the young trembling rival, who trembled yet with dignity; glowing roses worthy of victory streamed flaming over her cheek, and her golden hair flew abroad.

'Already she retained with pain in her tumultuous bosom the contracted breath; already she hung bending forward towards the goal; already the herald was lifting the trumpet, and her eyes swam with intoxicating joy.

'Proud of her courageous rival, prouder of herself, the lofty Britoness measured, but with noble glance, thee, Tuiskone: "Yes, by the bards, I grew up with thee in the grove of oaks:

'"But a tale had reached me that thou wast no more. Pardon, O Muse, if thou beest immortal, pardon that I but now learn it. Yonder at the goal alone will I learn it.

'"There it stands. But dost thou see the still further one, and its crowns also? This represt courage, this proud silence, this look which sinks fiery upon the ground, I know:

'"Yet weigh once again, ere the herald sound a note dangerous to thee. Am I not she who have measured myself with her from Thermopylæ, and with the stately one of the Seven Hills?"

'She spake: the earnest decisive moment drew nearer with the herald. "I love thee," answered quick with looks of flame, Teutona, "Britoness, I love thee to enthusiasm;

'"But not warmer than immortality and those Palms. Touch, if so wills thy genius, touch them before me; yet will I, when thou seizest it, seize also the crown.

'"And, O how I tremble! O ye Immortals, perhaps I may reach first the high goal: then, O then, may thy breath attain my loose-streaming hair!"

'The herald shrilled. They flew with eagle-speed. The wide career smoked up clouds of dust. I looked. Beyond the Oak billowed yet thicker the dust, and I lost them.'

'This beautiful allegory,' adds Mr. Taylor, 'requires 'no illustration; but it constitutes one of the reasons 'for suspecting that the younger may eventually be the 'victorious Muse.' We hope not; but that the generous race may yet last through long centuries. Tuiskone has shot through a mighty space, since this Poet saw her: what if she were now slackening her speed, and the Britoness quickening hers?

If the Essay on Klopstock is the best, that on Kotzebue is undoubtedly the worst, in this Book, or perhaps in any book written by a man of ability in our day. It is one of those acts which, in the spirit of philanthropy, we could wish Mr. Taylor to conceal in profoundest secrecy; were it not that hereby the 'stimulant' theory, a heresy which still lurks here and there even in our better criticism, is in some sort brought to a crisis, and may the sooner depart from this world, or at least from the high places of it, into others more suitable. Kotzebue, whom all nations and kindreds and tongues and peoples, his own people the foremost, after playing with him for some foolish hour, have swept out of doors as a lifeless bundle of dyed rags, is here scientifically examined, measured, pulse-felt, and pronounced to be living, and a divinity. He has such prolific 'invention;' abounds so in 'fine situations,' in passionate scenes; is so soul-harrowing, so stimulant. The *Proceedings at Bow Street* are stimulant enough; neither are prolific invention, interesting situations, or soul-harrowing passion wanting among the *authors* (true creators) who promulgate their *works* there; least of all if we follow them to Newgate, and the gallows: but when did the *Morning Herald* think of inserting its *Police Reports* among our Anthologies? Mr. Taylor is at the pains to analyze very many of Kotzebue's productions, and translates copiously from two or three: how the Siberian Governor took on when his daughter was about to run away with one Benjowsky, who however was enabled to surrender his prize, there on the beach, with sails hoisted, by 'looking at his wife's picture:' how the people 'lift young Burgundy from the Tun,' not indeed to drink

him, for he is not wine but a Duke: how a certain stout-hearted West Indian, that has made a fortune, proposes marriage to his two sisters; but finding the ladies reluctant, solicits their serving-woman, whose reputation is not only cracked, but visibly quite rent asunder; accepts her nevertheless, with her thriving cherub, and is the happiest of men;—with more of the like sort. On the strength of which we are assured that, 'according to my judgment, Kotzebue is the greatest 'dramatic genius that Europe has evolved since Shak-'speare.' Such is the table which Mr. Taylor has spread for pilgrims in the Prose Wilderness of Life: thus does he sit like a kind host, ready to carve; and though the viands and beverage are but, as it were, stewed garlic, Yarmouth herrings, and *blue-ruin*, praises them as 'stimulant,' and courteously presses the universe to fall to.

What a purveyor with this palate shall say to Nectar and Ambrosia, may be curious as a question in Natural History, but hardly otherwise. The most of what Mr. Taylor has written on Schiller, on Goethe, and the new Literature of Germany, a reader that loves him, as we honestly do, will consider as unwritten, or written in a state of somnambulism. He who has just quitted Kotzebue's Bear-garden, and Fives-court, and pronounces it to be all stimulant and very good, what is there for him to do in the Hall of the Gods? He looks transiently in; asks with mild authority, "Arian or Trinitarian? Quotidian or Stimulant?" and receiving no answer but a hollow echo, which almost sounds like laughter, passes on, muttering that they are dumb idols, or mere Nürnberg waxwork.

It remains to notice Mr. Taylor's Translations.

Apart from the choice of subjects, which in probably more than half the cases is unhappy, there is much to be said in favour of these. Compared with the average of British Translations, they may be pronounced of almost ideal excellence; compared with the best Translations extant, for example, the German *Shakspeare*, *Homer*, *Calderon*, they may still be called better than indifferent. One great merit Mr. Taylor has: rigorous adherence to his original; he endeavours at least to copy with all possible fidelity the turn of phrase, the tone, the very metre, whatever stands written for him. With the German language he has now had a long familiarity, and, what is no less essential, and perhaps still rarer among our Translators, has a decided understanding of English. All this of Mr. Taylor's own Translations: in the borrowed pieces, whereof there are several, we seldom, except indeed in those by Shelley and Coleridge, find much worth; sometimes a distinct worthlessness. Mr. Taylor has made no conscience of clearing those unfortunate performances even from their gross blunders. Thus, in that 'excellent version by Miss Plumtre,' we find this statement: 'Professor Müller could not utter 'a period without introducing the words *with under*, 'whether they had business there or not;' which statement, were it only on the ground that Professor Müller was not sent to Bedlam, there to utter periods, we venture to deny. Doubtless his besetting sin was *mitunter*, which indeed means *at the same time*, or the like (etymologically, *with among*), but nowise *with under*. One other instance we shall give, from a much more important subject. Mr. Taylor admits that he does not make much of *Faust:* however, he inserts Shelley's version of the

Mayday Night'; and another scene, evidently rendered by quite a different artist. In this latter, Margaret is in the Cathedral during High-Mass, but her whole thoughts are turned inwards on a secret shame and sorrow: an Evil Spirit is whispering in her ear; the Choir chant fragments of the *Dies iræ*; she is like to choke and sink. In the original, this passage is in verse; and, we presume, in the translation also,—founding on the capital letters. The concluding lines are these:

'MARGARET.

I feel imprison'd. The thick pillars gird me.
The vaults low'r o'er me. Air, air, I faint.

EVIL SPIRIT.

Where wilt thou lie concealed? for sin and shame
Remain not hidden—wo is coming *down*.

THE CHOIR.

Quid sum miser tum dicturus?
Quem patronum rogaturus?
Cum vix justus sit securus.

EVIL SPIRIT.

From thee the glorified *avert their view,*
The pure *forbear* to offer thee a hand.

THE CHOIR.

Quid sum miser tum dicturus?

MARGARET.

Neighbour, your———'

—Your what?—Angels and ministers of grace defend us!—'*Your Drambottle.*' Will Mr. Taylor have us un-

derstand, then, that 'the noble German nation,' more especially the fairer half thereof (for the 'Neighbour' is *Nachbarin*, Neighbouress), goes to church with a decanter of brandy in its pocket? Or would he not rather, even forcibly, interpret *Flâschchen* by *vinaigrette*, by *volatile-salts?*—The world has no notice that this passage is a borrowed one, but will, notwithstanding, as the more charitable theory, hope and believe so.

We have now done with Mr. Taylor; and would fain, after all that has come and gone, part with him in good nature and good will. He has spoken freely; we have answered freely. Far as we differ from him in regard to German Literature, and to the much more important subjects here connected with it; deeply as we feel convinced that his convictions are wrong and dangerous, are but half true, and, if taken for the whole truth, wholly false and fatal, we have nowise blinded ourselves to his vigorous talent, to his varied learning, his sincerity, his manful independence and self-support. Neither is it for speaking out plainly that we blame him. A man's honest, earnest opinion is the most precious of all he possesses: let him communicate this, if he is to communicate anything. There is, doubtless, a time to speak, and a time to keep silence; yet Fontenelle's celebrated aphorism, *I might have my hand full of truth, and would open only my little finger*, may be practised also to excess, and the little finger itself kept closed. That reserve, and knowing silence, long so universal among us, is less the fruit of active benevolence, of philosophic tolerance, than of indifference and weak conviction. Honest Scepticism, honest Atheism, is better than that withered lifeless Dilettantism and amateur Eclecti-

cism, which merely toys with all opinions; or than that wicked Machiavelism, which in thought denying everything, except that Power is Power, in words, for its own wise purposes, loudly believes everything: of both which miserable habitudes the day, even in England, is wellnigh over. That Mr. Taylor belongs not, and at no time belonged, to either of these classes, we account a true praise. Of his *Historic Survey* we have endeavoured to point out the faults and the merits: should he reach a second edition, which we hope, perhaps he may profit by some of our hints, and render the work less unworthy of himself and of his subject. In its present state and shape, this English Temple of Fame can content no one. A huge, anomalous, heterogeneous mass, no section of it like another, oriel-window alternating with rabbit-hole, wrought capital on pillar of dried mud; heaped together out of marble, loose earth, rude boulder-stone; hastily roofed in with shingles: such is the Temple of Fame; uninhabitable either for priest or statue, and which nothing but a continued suspension of the laws of gravity can keep from rushing ere long into a chaos of stone and dust. For the English worshipper, who in the meanwhile has no other temple, we search out the least dangerous apartments; for the future builder, the materials that will be valuable.

And now, in washing our hands of this all-too sordid but not unnecessary task, one word on a more momentous object. Does not the existence of such a Book, do not many other indications, traceable in France, in Germany, as well as here, betoken that a new era in the spiritual intercourse of Europe is approaching; that

instead of isolated, mutually repulsive National Literatures, a World-Literature may one day be looked for? The better minds of all countries begin to understand each other; and, which follows naturally, to love each other, and help each other; by whom ultimately all countries in all their proceedings are governed.

Late in man's history, yet clearly at length, it becomes manifest to the dullest, that mind is stronger than matter, that mind is the creator and shaper of matter; that not brute Force, but only Persuasion and Faith is the king of this world. The true Poet, who is but the inspired Thinker, is still an Orpheus whose Lyre tames the savage beasts, and evokes the dead rocks to fashion themselves into palaces and stately inhabited cities. It has been said, and may be repeated, that Literature is fast becoming all in all to us; our Church, our Senate, our whole Social Constitution. The true Pope of Christendom is not that feeble old man in Rome; nor is its Autocrat the Napoleon, the Nicolas, with his half million even of obedient bayonets: such Autocrat is himself but a more cunningly-devised bayonet and military engine in the hands of a mightier than he. The true Autocrat and Pope is that man, the real or seeming Wisest of the past age; crowned after death; who finds his Hierarchy of gifted Authors, his Clergy of assiduous Journalists; whose Decretals, written not on parchment, but on the living souls of men, it were an inversion of the Laws of Nature to *dis*obey. In these times of ours, all Intellect has fused itself into Literature: Literature, Printed Thought, is the molten sea and wonder-bearing chaos, into which mind after mind casts forth its opinion, its feeling, to be molten into the general mass, and to work

there; Interest after Interest is engulfed in it, or embarked on it: higher, higher it rises round all the Edifices of Existence; they must all be molten into it, and anew bodied forth from it, or stand unconsumed among its fiery surges. Wo to him whose Edifice is not built of true Asbest, and on the everlasting Rock; but on the false sand, and of the drift-wood of Accident, and the paper and parchment of antiquated Habit! For the power, or powers, exist not on our Earth, that can say to that sea, Roll back, or bid its proud waves be still.

What form so omnipotent an element will assume; how long it will welter to and fro as a wild Democracy, a wild Anarchy; what Constitution and Organization it will fashion for itself, and for what depends on it, in the depths of Time, is a subject for prophetic conjecture, wherein brightest hope is not unmingled with fearful apprehension and awe at the boundless unknown. The more cheering is this one thing which we do see and know: That its tendency is to a universal European Commonweal; that the wisest in all nations will communicate and co-operate; whereby Europe will again have its true Sacred College, and Council of Amphictyons; wars will become rarer, less inhuman, and in the course of centuries such delirious ferocity in nations, as in individuals it already is, may be proscribed, and become obsolete forever.

FRACTIONS.

[1823-1833.]

I.

TRAGEDY OF THE NIGHT-MOTH.

Magnâ ausus.

'Tis placid midnight, stars are keeping
Their meek and silent course in heaven;
Save pale recluse, for knowledge seeking,
All mortal things to sleep are given.

But see! a wandering Night-moth enters,
Allured by taper gleaming bright;
A while keeps hovering round, then ventures
On Goethe's mystic page to light.

With awe she views the candle blazing;
A universe of fire it seems
To moth-*savante* with rapture gazing,
Or Fount whence Life and Motion streams.

What passions in her small heart whirling,
Hopes boundless, adoration, dread;
At length her tiny pinions twirling,
She darts and—puff!—the moth is dead!

The sullen flame, for her scarce sparkling,
Gives but one hiss, one fitful glare;
Now bright and busy, now all darkling,
She snaps and fades to empty air.

Her bright gray form that spread so slimly,
Some fan she seemed of pigmy Queen;
Her silky cloak that lay so trimly,
Her wee, wee eyes that looked so keen,

Last moment here, now gone for ever,
To nought are passed with fiery pain;
And ages circling round shall never
Give to this creature shape again!

Poor moth! near weeping I lament thee,
Thy glossy form, thy instant wo;
'Twas zeal for 'things too high' that sent thee
From cheery earth to shades below.

Short speck of boundless Space was needed
For home, for kingdom, world to thee!
Where passed unheeding as unheeded,
Thy little life from sorrow free.

But syren hopes from out thy dwelling
Enticed thee, bade thee earth explore,—
Thy frame so late with rapture swelling,
Is swept from earth forevermore!

Poor moth! thy fate my own resembles:
Me too a restless asking mind
Hath sent on far and weary rambles,
To seek the good I ne'er shall find.

Like thee, with common lot contented,
With humble joys and vulgar fate,
I might have lived and ne'er lamented,
Moth of a larger size, a longer date!

But Nature's majesty unveiling
What seem'd her wildest, grandest charms,
Eternal Truth and Beauty hailing,
Like thee, I rushed into her arms.

What gained we, little moth? Thy ashes,
Thy one brief parting pang may show:
And thoughts like these, for soul that dashes
From deep to deep, are—death more slow!

II.

CUI BONO.

What is Hope? A smiling rainbow
Children follow through the wet;
'Tis not here, still yonder, yonder:
Never urchin found it yet.

What is Life? A thawing iceboard
On a sea with sunny shore;—
Gay we sail; it melts beneath us;
We are sunk, and seen no more.

What is Man? A foolish baby,
Vainly strives, and fights, and frets;
Demanding all, deserving nothing;—
One small grave is what he gets.

III.

FOUR FABLES.

1.

Once upon a time, a man, somewhat in drink belike, raised a dreadful outcry at the corner of the market-place, "That the world was all turned topsy-turvy; that the men and cattle were all walking with their feet uppermost; that the houses and earth at large (if they did not mind it) would fall into the sky; in short, that unless prompt means were taken, things in general were on the high road to the Devil." As the people only laughed at him, he cried the louder and more vehemently; nay, at last, began objuring, foaming, imprecating; when a goodnatured auditor, going up, took the orator by the haunches, and softly inverting his position, set him down—on his feet. The which upon perceiving, his mind was staggered not a little. "Ha! deuce take it!" cried he, rubbing his eyes, "so it was not the world that was hanging by its feet, then, but I that was standing on my head!"

Censor, *Castigator morum*, Radical Reformer, by whatever name thou art called! have a care; especially if thou art getting loud!

PILPAY JUNIOR.

2.

"Gentlemen," said a conjuror, one fine starry evening, "these heavens are a *deceptio visûs*; what you call stars are nothing but fiery motes in the air. Wait a little, I

will clear them off, and shew you how the matter is." Whereupon the artist produced a long syringe of great force; and, stooping over the neighbouring puddle, filled it with mud and dirty water, which he then squirted with might and main against the zenith. The wiser of the company unfurled their umbrellas; but most part, looking up in triumph, cried, "Down with delusion! It is an age of science! Have we not tallow lights, then?" Here the mud and dirty water fell, and bespattered and beplastered these simple persons, and even put out the eyes of several, so that they never saw the stars any more.

Enlightened Utilitarian! art thou aware that this patent logic-mill of thine, which grindeth with such a clatter, is but a mill?

P. J.

3.

"It is I that support this household," said a hen one day to herself; "the master cannot breakfast without an egg, for he is dyspeptical and would die, and it is I that lay it. And here is this ugly poodle, doing nothing earthly, and gets thrice the victual I do, and is caressed all day! By the Cock of Minerva, they shall give me a double portion of oats, or they have eaten their last egg!" But much as she cackled and creaked, the scullion would not give her an extra grain; whereupon, in dudgeon, she hid her next egg in the dunghill, and did nothing but cackle and creak all day. The scullion suffered her for a week, then (by order) drew her neck, and purchased other eggs at sixpence the dozen.

Man! why frettest thou and whinest thou? This

blockhead is happier than thou, and still a blockhead? Ah, sure enough, thy wages are too low! Wilt thou *strike work* with Providence then, and force him to 'an alternative?' Believe it, he will do without thee: *'il n'y a point d'homme nécessaire.'*

P. J.

4.

"What is the use of thee, thou gnarled sapling?" said a young larch-tree to a young oak. "I grow three feet in a year, thou scarcely as many inches; I am straight and taper as a reed, thou straggling and twisted as a loosened withe."—"And thy duration," answered the oak, "is some third part of man's life, and I am appointed to flourish for a thousand years. Thou art felled and sawed into paling, where thou rottest and art burned after a single summer; of me are fashioned battle-ships, and I carry mariners and heroes into unknown seas."

The richer a nature, the harder and slower its development. Two boys were once of a class in the Edinburgh grammar-school: John ever trim, precise, and dux; Walter ever slovenly, confused, and dolt. In due time, John became Baillie John of Hunter-square, and Walter became Sir Walter Scott of the Universe.

The quickest and completest of all vegetables is the cabbage.

P. J.

IV.

THE SOWER'S SONG.

Now hands to seedsheet, boys,
We step and we cast; old Time's on wing;
And would ye partake of Harvest's joys,
The corn must be sown in Spring.
Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.

Old Earth is a pleasure to see
In sunshiny cloak of red and green;
The furrow lies fresh; this Year will be
As Years that are past have been.
Fall gently, &c.

Old Mother, receive this corn,
The son of Six Thousand golden sires:
All these on thy kindly breast were born;
One more thy poor child requires.
Fall gently, &c.

Now steady and sure again,
And measure of stroke and step we keep;
Thus up and thus down we cast our grain:
Sow well and you gladly reap.
Fall gently and still, good corn,
Lie warm in thy earthy bed;
And stand so yellow some morn,
For beast and man must be fed.

V.

ADIEU.

Let time and chance combine, combine,
Let time and chance combine;
The fairest love from heaven above,
That love of yours was mine,
My dear,
That love of yours was mine.

The past is fled and gone, and gone,
The past is fled and gone;
If nought but pain to me remain,
I 'll fare in memory on,
My dear,
I 'll fare in memory on.

The saddest tears must fall, must fall,
The saddest tears must fall;
In weal or wo, in this world below,
I love you ever and all,
My dear,
I love you ever and all.

A long road full of pain, of pain,
A long road full of pain;
One soul, one heart, sworn ne'er to part,—
We ne'er can meet again,
My dear,
We ne'er can meet again.

Hard fate will not allow, allow,
Hard fate will not allow;
We blessed were as the angels are,—
Adieu forever now,
My dear,
Adieu forever now.'

VI.

THE BEETLE.

Poor hobbling Beetle, needst not haste;
Should Traveller Traveller thus alarm?
Pursue thy journey through the waste,
Not foot of mine shall work thee harm.

Who knows what errand grave thou hast,
'Small family'—that have not dined?
Lodged under pebble, there they fast,
Till head of house have raised the wind!

Man's bread lies 'mong the feet of men;
For cark and moil sufficient cause!
Who cannot sow would reap;—and then
In Beetledom are no Poor-Laws.

And if thy Wife and thou agree
But ill, as like when short of victual,
I swear, the Public Sympathy
Thy fortune meriteth, poor Beetle.

Alas, and I should do thee skaith,
To realms of Night with heeltap send!
Who judg'd thee worthy pains of Death?—
On Earth, save me, without a Friend!

Pass on, poor Beetle, venerable
Art thou, were wonders ne'er so rife;
Thou hast what Bel to Tower of Babel
Not gave: the chief of wonders—LIFE.

Also of 'ancient family,'
Though small in size, of feature dark!
What Debrett's Peer surpasseth thee?
Thy Ancestor was in Noah's Ark.

VII.

TO-DAY.

So here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think wilt thou let it
Slip useless away.

Out of Eternity
This new Day is born;
Into Eternity,
At night, will return.

Behold it aforetime
No eye ever did:
So soon it forever
From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
Another blue Day:
Think wilt thou let it
Slip useless away.

VIII.

FORTUNA.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west,
And the frost falls and the rain:
A weary heart went thankful to rest,
And must rise to toil again, 'gain,
And must rise to toil again.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west,
And there comes good luck and bad;
The thriftiest man is the cheerfullest;
'Tis a thriftless thing to be sad, sad,
'Tis a thriftless thing to be sad.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west;
Ye shall know a tree by its fruit:
This world, they say, is worst to the best;—
But a dastard has evil to boot, boot,
But a dastard has evil to boot.

The wind blows east, the wind blows west;
What skills it to mourn or to talk?
A journey I have, and far ere I rest;
I must bundle my wallets and walk, walk,
I must bundle my wallets and walk.

The wind does blow as it lists alway;
Canst thou change this world to thy mind?
The world will wander its own wise way;
I also will wander mine, mine,
I also will wander mine.

CHARACTERISTICS.*

[1831.]

THE healthy know not of their health, but only the sick: this is the Physician's Aphorism; and applicable in a far wider sense than he gives it. We may say, it holds no less in moral, intellectual, political, poetical, than in merely corporeal therapeutics; that wherever, or in what shape soever, powers of the sort which can be named *vital* are at work, herein lies the test of their working right or working wrong.

In the Body, for example, as all doctors are agreed, the first condition of complete health is, that each organ perform its function unconsciously, unheeded; let but any organ announce its separate existence, were it even boastfully, and for pleasure, not for pain, then already has one of those unfortunate 'false centres of sensibility' established itself, already is derangement there.

---

* EDINBURGH REVIEW, No. 108. — 1. An Essay on the Origin and Prospects of Man. By Thomas Hope. 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1831.

2. *Philosophische Vorlesungen, insbesondere über Philosophie der Sprache und des Wortes. Geschrieben und vorgetragen zu Dresden im December* 1828, *und in den ersten Tagen des Januars* 1829. (Philosophical Lectures, especially on the Philosophy of Language and the Gift of Speech. Written and delivered at Dresden in December 1828, and the early days of January 1829.) By Friedrich von Schlegel. 8vo. Vienna, 1830.

The perfection of bodily wellbeing is, that the collective bodily activities seem one; and be manifested, moreover, not in themselves, but in the action they accomplish. If a Dr. Kitchiner boast that his system is in high order, Dietetic Philosophy may indeed take credit; but the true Peptician was that Countryman who answered that, "for his part, he had no system." In fact, unity, agreement is always silent, or soft-voiced; it is only discord that loudly proclaims itself. So long as the several elements of Life, all fitly adjusted, can pour forth their movement like harmonious tuned strings, it is a melody and unison; Life, from its mysterious fountains, flows out as in celestial music and diapason,—which also, like that other music of the spheres, even because it is perennial and complete, without interruption and without imperfection, might be fabled to escape the ear. Thus too, in some languages, is the state of health well denoted by a term expressing unity; when we feel ourselves as we wish to be, we say that we are *whole*.

Few mortals, it is to be feared, are permanently blessed with that felicity of 'having no system:' nevertheless, most of us, looking back on young years, may remember seasons of a light, aërial translucency and elasticity and perfect freedom; the body had not yet become the prison-house of the soul, but was its vehicle and implement, like a creature of the thought, and altogether pliant to its bidding. We knew not that we had limbs, we only lifted, hurled and leapt; through eye and ear, and all avenues of sense, came clear unimpeded tidings from without, and from within issued clear victorious force; we stood as in the centre of Nature,

giving and receiving, in harmony with it all; unlike Virgil's Husbandmen, 'too happy *because* we did not know our blessedness.' In those days, health and sickness were foreign traditions that did not concern us; our whole being was as yet One, the whole man like an incorporated Will. Such, were Rest or ever-successful Labour the human lot, might our life continue to be: a pure, perpetual, unregarded music; a beam of perfect white light, rendering all things visible, but itself unseen, even because it was of that perfect whiteness, and no irregular obstruction had yet broken it into colours. The beginning of Inquiry is Disease: all Science, if we consider well, as it must have originated in the feeling of something being wrong, so it is and continues to be but Division, Dismemberment, and partial healing of the wrong. Thus, as was of old written, the Tree of Knowledge springs from a root of evil, and bears fruits of good and evil. Had Adam remained in Paradise, there had been no Anatomy and no Metaphysics.

But, alas, as the Philosopher declares, 'Life itself is a disease; a working incited by suffering;' action from passion! The memory of that first state of Freedom and paradisiac Unconsciousness has faded away into an ideal poetic dream. We stand here too conscious of many things: with Knowledge, the symptom of Derangement, we must even do our best to restore a little Order. Life is, in few instances, and at rare intervals, the diapason of a heavenly melody; oftenest the fierce jar of disruptions and convulsions, which, do what we will, there is no disregarding. Nevertheless, such is still the wish of Nature on our behalf; in all vital action, her manifest purpose and effort is, that we should

be unconscious of it, and, like the peptic Countryman, never know that we 'have a system.' For indeed vital action everywhere is emphatically a means, not an end; Life is not given us for the mere sake of Living, but always with an ulterior external Aim: neither is it on the process, on the means, but rather on the result, that Nature, in any of her doings, is wont to entrust us with insight and volition. Boundless as is the domain of man, it is but a small fractional proportion of it that he rules with Consciousness and by Forethought: what he can contrive, nay what he can altogether know and comprehend, is essentially the mechanical, small; the great is ever, in one sense or other, the vital; it is essentially the mysterious, and only the surface of it can be understood. But Nature, it might seem, strives, like a kind mother, to hide from us even this, that she is a mystery: she will have us rest on her beautiful and awful bosom as if it were our secure home; on the bottomless boundless Deep, whereon all human things fearfully and wonderfully swim, she will have us walk and build, as if the film which supported us there (which any scratch of a bare bodkin will rend asunder, any sputter of a pistol-shot instantaneously burn up) were no film, but a solid rock-foundation. Forever in the neighbourhood of an inevitable Death, man can forget that he is born to die; of his Life, which, strictly meditated, contains in it an Immensity and an Eternity, he can conceive lightly, as of a simple implement wherewith to do day-labour and earn wages. So cunningly does Nature, the mother of all highest Art, which only apes her from afar, 'body forth the Finite from the Infinite;' and guide man safe on his wondrous path, not more by endowing him with

vision, than, at the right place, with blindness! Under all her works, chiefly under her noblest work, Life, lies a basis of Darkness, which she benignantly conceals; in Life, too, the roots and inward circulations which stretch down fearfully to the regions of Death and Night, shall not hint of their existence, and only the fair stem with its leaves and flowers, shone on by the fair sun, disclose itself, and joyfully grow.

However, without venturing into the abstruse, or too eagerly asking Why and How, in things where our answer must needs prove, in great part, an echo of the question, let us be content to remark farther, in the merely historical way, how that Aphorism of the bodily Physician holds good in quite other departments. Of the Soul, with her activities, we shall find it no less true than of the Body: nay, cry the Spiritualists, is not that very division of the unity, Man, into a dualism of Soul and Body, itself the symptom of disease; as, perhaps, your frightful theory of Materialism, of his being but a Body, and therefore, at least, once more a unity, may be the paroxysm which was critical, and the beginning of cure! But omitting this, we observe, with confidence enough, that the truly strong mind, view it as Intellect, as Morality, or under any other aspect, is nowise the mind acquainted with its strength; that here as before the sign of health is Unconsciousness. In our inward, as in our outward world, what is mechanical lies open to us: not what is dynamical and has vitality. Of our Thinking, we might say, it is but the mere upper surface that we shape into articulate Thoughts;—underneath the region of argument and conscious discourse, lies the region of meditation; here, in its quiet mysteri-

ous depths, dwells what vital force is in us; here, if aught is to be created, and not merely manufactured and communicated, must the work go on. Manufacture is intelligible, but trivial; Creation is great, and cannot be understood. Thus if the Debater and Demonstrator, whom we may rank as the lowest of true thinkers, knows what he has done, and how he did it, the Artist, whom we rank as the highest, knows not; must speak of Inspiration, and in one or the other dialect, call his work the gift of a divinity.

But on the whole, 'genius is ever a secret to itself;' of this old truth we have, on all sides, daily evidence. The Shakspeare takes no airs for writing *Hamlet* and the *Tempest*, understands not that it is anything surprising: Milton, again, is more conscious of his faculty, which accordingly is an inferior one. On the other hand, what cackling and strutting must we not often hear and see, when, in some shape of academical prolusion, maiden speech, review article, this or the other well-fledged goose has produced its goose-egg, of quite measurable value, were it the pink of its whole kind; and wonders why all mortals do not wonder!

Foolish enough, too, was the College Tutor's surprise at Walter Shandy: how, though unread in Aristotle, he could nevertheless argue; and not knowing the name of any dialectic tool, handled them all to perfection. Is it the skilfullest anatomist that cuts the best figure at Sadler's Wells? Or does the boxer hit better for knowing that he has a *flexor longus* and a *flexor brevis*? But, indeed, as in the higher case of the Poet, so here in that of the Speaker and Inquirer, the true force is an unconscious one. The healthy Understand-

ing, we should say, is not the Logical, argumentative, but the Intuitive; for the end of Understanding is not to prove, and find reasons, but to know and believe. Of logic, and its limits, and uses and abuses, there were much to be said and examined; one fact, however, which chiefly concerns us here, has long been familiar: that the man of logic and the man of insight; the Reasoner and the Discoverer, or even Knower, are quite separable,—indeed, for most part, quite separate characters. In practical matters, for example, has it not become almost proverbial that the man of logic cannot prosper? This is he whom business people call Systematic and Theorizer and Word-monger; his *vital* intellectual force lies dormant or extinct, his whole force is mechanical, conscious: of such a one it is foreseen that, when once confronted with the infinite complexities of the real world, his little compact theorem of the world will be found wanting; that unless he can throw it overboard, and become a new creature, he will necessarily founder. Nay, in mere Speculation itself, the most ineffectual of all characters, generally speaking, is your dialectic man-at-arms; were he armed cap-a-pie in syllogistic mail of proof, and perfect master of logic-fence, how little does it avail him! Consider the old Schoolmen, and their pilgrimage towards Truth: the faithfullest endeavour, incessant unwearied motion, often great natural vigour; only no progress: nothing but antic feats of one limb poised against the other; there they balanced, somersetted, and made postures; at best gyrated swiftly, with some pleasure, like Spinning Dervishes, and ended where they began. So is it, so will it always be, with all System-makers and builders of logical card-castles;

of which class a certain remnant must, in every age, as they do in our own, survive and build. Logic is good, but it is not the best. The Irrefragable Doctor, with his chains of induction, his corollaries, dilemmas, and other cunning logical diagrams and apparatus, will cast you a beautiful horoscope, and speak reasonable things; nevertheless your stolen jewel, which you wanted him to find you, is not forthcoming. Often by some winged word, winged as the thunderbolt is, of a Luther, a Napoleon, a Goethe, shall we see the difficulty split asunder, and its secret laid bare; while the Irrefragable, with all his logical tools, hews at it, and hovers round it, and finds it on all hands too hard for him.

Again, in the difference between Oratory and Rhetoric, as indeed everywhere in that superiority of what is called the Natural over the Artificial, we find a similar illustration. The Orator persuades and carries all with him, he knows not how; the Rhetorician can prove that he ought to have persuaded and carried all with him: the one is in a state of healthy unconsciousness, as if he 'had no system;' the other, in virtue of regimen and dietetic punctuality, feels at best that 'his system is in high order.' So stands it, in short, with all forms of Intellect, whether as directed to the finding of truth, or to the fit imparting thereof; to Poetry, to Eloquence, to depth of Insight, which is the basis of both these; always the characteristic of right performance is a certain spontaneity, an unconsciousness; 'the healthy know not of their health, but only the sick.' So that the old precept of the critic, as crabbed as it looked to his ambitious disciple, might contain in it a most fundamental truth, applicable to us all, and in much else than Litera-

ture: "Whenever you have written any sentence that looks particularly excellent, be sure to blot it out." In like manner, under milder phraseology, and with a meaning purposely much wider, a living Thinker has taught us: 'Of the Wrong we are always conscious, of the Right never.'

But if such is the law with regard to Speculation and the Intellectual power of man, much more is it with regard to Conduct, and the power, manifested chiefly therein, which we name Moral. 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth;' whisper not to thy own heart, How worthy is this action; for then it is already becoming worthless. The good man is he who *works* continually in welldoing; to whom welldoing is as his natural existence, awakening no astonishment, requiring no commentary; but there, like a thing of course, and as if it could not but be so. Self-contemplation, on the other hand, is infallibly the symptom of disease, be it or be it not the sign of cure. An unhealthy Virtue is one that consumes itself to leanness in repenting and anxiety; or, still worse, that inflates itself into dropsical boastfulness and vain-glory: either way, it is a self-seeking; an unprofitable looking behind us to measure the way we have made: whereas the sole concern is to walk continually forward, and make more way. If in any sphere of man's life, then in the Moral sphere, as the inmost and most vital of all, it is good that there be wholeness; that there be unconsciousness, which is the evidence of this. Let the free, reasonable Will, which dwells in us, as in our Holy of Holies, be indeed free, and obeyed like a Divinity, as is its right and its effort: the perfect obedience will be the silent one.

Such perhaps were the sense of that maxim, enunciating, as is usual, but the half of a truth: To say that we have a clear conscience is to utter a solecism; had we never sinned, we should have had no conscience. Were defeat unknown, neither would victory be celebrated by songs of triumph.

This, true enough, is an ideal, impossible state of being; yet ever the goal towards which our actual state of being strives; which it is the more perfect the nearer it can approach. Nor, in our actual world, where Labour must often prove *in*effectual, and thus in all senses Light alternate with Darkness, and the nature of an ideal Morality be much modified, is the case, thus far, materially different. It is a fact which escapes no one, that, generally speaking, whoso is acquainted with his worth has but a little stock to cultivate acquaintance with. Above all, the public acknowledgment of such acquaintance, indicating that it has reached quite an intimate footing, bodes ill. Already, to the popular judgment, he who talks much about Virtue in the abstract, begins to be suspect; it is shrewdly guessed that where there is great preaching, there will be little almsgiving. Or again, on a wider scale, we can remark that ages of Heroism are not ages of Moral Philosophy; Virtue, when it can be philosophized of, has become aware of itself, is sickly, and beginning to decline. A spontaneous habitual all-pervading spirit of Chivalrous Valour shrinks together, and perks itself up into shrivelled Points of Honour; humane Courtesy and Nobleness of mind dwindle into punctilious Politeness, 'avoiding meats;' 'paying tithe of mint and anise, neglecting the weightier matters of the law.' Goodness, which was

a rule to itself, must appeal to Precept, and seek strength from Sanctions; the Freewill no longer reigns unquestioned and by divine right, but like a mere earthly sovereign, by expediency, by Rewards and Punishments: or rather, let us say, the Freewill, so far as may be, has abdicated and withdrawn into the dark, and a spectral nightmare of a Necessity usurps its throne; for now that mysterious Self-impulse of the whole man, heaven-inspired, and in all senses partaking of the Infinite, being captiously questioned in a finite dialect, and answering, as it needs must, by silence, — is conceived as non-extant, and only the outward Mechanism of it remains acknowledged: of Volition, except as the synonym of Desire, we hear nothing; of 'Motives,' without any Mover, more than enough.

So, too, when the generous Affections have become wellnigh paralytic, we have the reign of Sentimentality. The greatness, the profitableness, at any rate the extremely ornamental nature of high feeling, and the luxury of doing good; charity, love, self-forgetfulness, devotedness, and all manner of godlike magnanimity are everywhere insisted on, and pressingly inculcated in speech and writing, in prose and verse; Socinian Preachers proclaim 'Benevolence' to all the four winds, and have TRUTH engraved on their watch-seals: unhappily with little or no effect. Were the limbs in right walking order, why so much demonstrating of motion? The barrenest of all mortals is the Sentimentalist. Granting even that he were sincere, and did not wilfully deceive us, or without first deceiving himself, what good is in him? Does he not lie there as a perpetual lesson of despair, and type of bedrid valetu-

dinarian impotence? His is emphatically a Virtue that has become, through every fibre, conscious of itself; it is all sick, and feels as if it were made of glass, and durst not touch or be touched: in the shape of work, it can do nothing; at the utmost, by incessant nursing and caudling, keep itself alive. As the last stage of all, when Virtue, properly so called, has ceased to be practised, and become extinct, and a mere remembrance, we have the era of Sophists, descanting of its existence, proving it, denying it, mechanically 'accounting' for it;—as dissectors and demonstrators cannot operate till once the body be dead.

Thus is true Moral genius, like true Intellectual, which indeed is but a lower phasis thereof, 'ever a secret to itself.' The healthy moral nature loves Goodness, and without wonder wholly lives in it: the unhealthy makes love to it, and would fain get to live in it; or, finding such courtship fruitless, turns round, and not without contempt abandons it. These curious relations of the Voluntary and Conscious to the Involuntary and Unconscious, and the small proportion which, in all departments of our life, the former bears to the latter,—might lead us into deep questions of Psychology and Physiology: such, however, belong not to our present object. Enough, if the fact itself become apparent, that Nature so meant it with us; that in this wise we are made. We may now say, that view man's individual Existence under what aspect we will, under the highest spiritual, as under the merely animal aspect, everywhere the grand vital energy, while in its sound state, is an unseen unconscious one; or, in the words of our old

Aphorism, 'the healthy know not of their health, but only the sick.'

To understand man, however, we must look beyond the individual man and his actions or interests, and view him in combination with his fellows. It is in Society that man first feels what he is; first becomes what he can be. In Society an altogether new set of spiritual activities are evolved in him, and the old immeasurably quickened and strengthened. Society is the genial element wherein his nature first lives and grows; the solitary man were but a small portion of himself, and must continue for ever folded in, stunted, and only half alive. 'Already,' says a deep Thinker, with more meaning than will disclose itself at once, 'my opinion, my conviction, gains *infinitely* in strength 'and sureness, the moment a second mind has adopted 'it.' Such, even in its simplest form, is association; so wondrous the communion of soul with soul as directed to the mere act of Knowing! In other higher acts, the wonder is still more manifest; as in that portion of our being which we name the Moral: for properly, indeed, all communion is of a moral sort, whereof such intellectual communion (in the act of knowing) is itself an example. But with regard to Morals strictly so called, it is in Society, we might almost say, that Morality begins; here at least it takes an altogether new form, and on every side, as in living growth, expands itself. The Duties of Man to himself, to what is Highest in himself, make but the First Table of the Law: to the First Table is now superadded a Second, with the Duties of Man to

his Neighbour; whereby also the significance of the First now assumes its true importance. Man has joined himself with man; soul acts and reacts on soul; a mystic miraculous unfathomable Union establishes itself; Life, in all its elements, has become intensated, consecrated. The lightning-spark of Thought, generated, or say rather heaven-kindled, in the solitary mind, awakens its express likeness in another mind, in a thousand other minds, and all blaze up together in combined fire; reverberated from mind to mind, fed also with fresh fuel in each, it acquires incalculable new light as Thought, incalculable new heat as converted into Action. By and by, a common store of Thought can accumulate, and be transmitted as an everlasting possession: Literature, whether as preserved in the memory of Bards, in Runes and Hieroglyphs engraved on stone, or in Books of written or printed paper, comes into existence, and begins to play its wondrous part. Polities are formed; the weak submitting to the strong; with a willing loyalty, giving obedience that he may receive guidance: or say rather, in honour of our nature, the ignorant submitting to the wise; for so it is in all even the rudest communities, man never yields himself wholly to brute Force, but always to moral Greatness; thus the universal title of respect, from the Oriental *Scheik*, from the *Sachem* of the red Indians, down to our English *Sir*, implies only that he whom we mean to honour is our *senior*. Last, as the crown and all-supporting keystone of the fabric, Religion arises. The devout meditation of the isolated man, which flitted through his soul, like a transient tone of Love and Awe from unknown lands, acquires certainty, continu-

ance, when it is shared in by his brother men. 'Where two or three are gathered together' in the name of the Highest, then first does the Highest, as it is written, 'appear among them to bless them;' then first does an Altar and act of united Worship open a way from Earth to Heaven; whereon, were it but a simple Jacob's-ladder, the heavenly Messengers will travel, with glad tidings and unspeakable gifts for men. 'Such is SOCIETY, the vital articulation of many individuals into a new collective individual: greatly the most important of man's attainments on this earth; that in which, and by virtue of which, all his other attainments and attempts find their arena, and have their value. Considered well, Society is the standing wonder of our existence; a true region of the Supernatural; as it were, a second all-embracing Life, wherein our first individual Life becomes doubly and trebly alive, and whatever of Infinitude was in us bodies itself forth, and becomes visible and active.

To figure Society as endowed with life is scarcely a metaphor; but rather the statement of a fact by such imperfect methods as language affords. Look at it closely, that mystic Union, Nature's highest work with man, wherein man's volition plays an indispensable yet so subordinate a part, and the small Mechanical grows so mysteriously and indissolubly out of the infinite Dynamical, like Body out of Spirit,—is truly enough vital, what we can call vital, and bears the distinguishing character of life. In the same style also, we can say that Society has its periods of sickness and vigour, of youth, manhood, decrepitude, dissolution, and new-birth; in one or other of which stages we may, in all

times, and all places where men inhabit, discern it; and do ourselves, in this time and place, whether as co-operating or as contending, as healthy members or as diseased ones, to our joy and sorrow, form part of it. The question, What is the actual condition of Society? has in these days unhappily become important enough. No one of us is unconcerned in that question; but for the majority of thinking men a true answer to it, such is the state of matters, appears almost as the one thing needful. Meanwhile as the true answer, that is to say, the complete and fundamental answer and settlement, often as it has been demanded, is nowhere forthcoming, and indeed by its nature is impossible, any honest approximation towards such is not without value. The feeblest light, or even so much as a more precise recognition of the darkness, which is the first step to attainment of light, will be welcome.

This once understood, let it not seem idle if we remark that here too our old Aphorism holds; that again in the Body Politic, as in the animal body, the sign of right performance is Unconsciousness. Such indeed is virtually the meaning of that phrase 'artificial state of society,' as contrasted with the natural state, and indicating something so inferior to it. For, in all vital things, men distinguish an Artificial and a Natural; founding on some dim perception or sentiment of the very truth we here insist on: the artificial is the conscious, mechanical; the natural is the unconscious, dynamical. Thus as we have an artificial Poetry, and prize only the natural; so likewise we have an artificial Morality, an artificial Wisdom, an artificial Society. The artificial Society is precisely one that knows its

own structure, its own internal functions; not in watching, not in knowing which, but in working outwardly to the fulfilment of its aim, does the wellbeing of a Society consist. Every Society, every Polity, has a spiritual principle; is the embodyment, tentative, and more or less complete, of an Idea: all its tendencies of endeavour, specialties of custom, its laws, politics, and whole procedure (as the glance of some Montesquieu, across innumerable superficial entanglements, can partly decipher) are prescribed by an Idea, and flow naturally from it, as movements from the living source of motion. This Idea, be it of devotion to a man or class of men, to a creed, to an institution, or even, as in more ancient times, to a piece of land, is ever a true Loyalty; has in it something of a religious, paramount, quite infinite character; it is properly the Soul of the State, its Life; mysterious as other forms of Life, and like these working secretly, and in a depth beyond that of consciousness.

Accordingly, it is not in the vigorous ages of a Roman Republic that Treatises of the Commonwealth are written: while the Decii are rushing with devoted bodies on the enemies of Rome, what need of preaching Patriotism? The virtue of Patriotism has already sunk from its pristine all-transcendent condition, before it has received a name. So long as the Commonwealth continues rightly athletic, it cares not to dabble in anatomy. Why teach obedience to the Sovereign; why so much as admire it, or separately recognise it, while a divine idea of Obedience perennially inspires all men? Loyalty, like Patriotism, of which it is a form, was not praised till it had begun to decline; the *Preux Chevaliers* first

became rightly admirable, when 'dying for their king' had ceased to be a habit with chevaliers. For if the mystic significance of the State, let this be what it may, dwells vitally in every heart, encircles every life as with a second higher life, how should it stand self-questioning? It must rush outward, and express itself by works. Besides, if perfect, it is there as by necessity, and does not excite inquiry: it is also by nature infinite, has no limits; therefore can be circumscribed by no conditions and definitions; cannot be reasoned of; except *musically*, or in the language of Poetry, cannot yet so much as be spoken of.

In those days, Society was what we name healthy, sound at heart. Not indeed without suffering enough; not without perplexities, difficulty on every side: for such is the appointment of man; his highest and sole blessedness is, that he toil, and know what to toil at: not in ease, but in united victorious labour, which is at once evil and the victory over evil, does his Freedom lie. Nay, often, looking no deeper than such superficial perplexities of the early Time, historians have taught us that it was all one mass of contradiction and disease; and in the antique Republic, or feudal Monarchy, have seen only the confused chaotic quarry, not the robust labourer, or the stately edifice he was building of it. If Society, in such ages, had its difficulty, it had also its strength; if sorrowful masses of rubbish so encumbered it, the tough sinews to hurl them aside, with indomitable heart, were not wanting. Society went along without complaint; did not stop to scrutinize itself, to say, How well I perform, or, Alas, how ill! Men did not yet feel themselves to be 'the envy of surround-

ing nations;' and were enviable on that very account. Society was what we can call *whole*, in both senses of the word. The individual man was in himself a whole, or complete union; and could combine with his fellows as the living member of a greater whole. For all men, through their life, were animated by one great Idea; thus all efforts pointed one way, everywhere there was *wholeness*. Opinion and Action had not yet become disunited; but the former could still produce the latter, or attempt to produce it; as the stamp does its impression while the wax is not hardened. Thought, and the voice of thought were also a unison; thus, instead of Speculation we had Poetry; Literature, in its rude utterance, was as yet a heroic Song, perhaps too a devotional Anthem. Religion was everywhere; Philosophy lay hid under it, peacefully included in it. Herein, as in the life-centre of all, lay the true health and oneness. Only at a later era must Religion split itself into Philosophies; and thereby, the vital union of Thought being lost, disunion and mutual collision in all provinces of Speech and of Action more and more prevail. For if the Poet, or Priest, or by whatever title the inspired thinker may be named, is the sign of vigour and wellbeing; so likewise is the Logician, or uninspired thinker, the sign of disease, probably of decrepitude and decay. Thus, not to mention other instances, one of them much nearer hand,—so soon as Prophecy among the Hebrews had ceased, then did the reign of Argumentation begin; and the ancient Theocracy, in its Sadduceeisms and Phariseeisms, and vain jangling of sects and doctors, give token that the *soul* of it had fled, and that the *body* itself, by natural dissolution, 'with the old forces still at work, but

working in reverse order,' was on the road to final disappearance.

We might pursue this question into innumerable other ramifications; and everywhere, under new shapes, find the same truth, which we here so imperfectly enunciate, disclosed: that throughout the whole world of man, in all manifestations and performances of his nature, outward and inward, personal and social, the Perfect, the Great is a mystery to itself, knows not itself; whatsoever does know itself is already little, and more or less imperfect. Or otherwise, we may say, Unconsciousness belongs to pure unmixed life; Consciousness to a diseased mixture and conflict of life and death: Unconsciousness is the sign of creation; Consciousness at best, that of manufacture. So deep, in this existence of ours, is the significance of Mystery. Well might the Ancients make Silence a god; for it is the element of all godhood, infinitude, or transcendental greatness; at once the source and the ocean wherein all such begins and ends. In the same sense too, have Poets sung 'Hymns to the Night;' as if Night were nobler than Day; as if Day were but a small motley-coloured veil spread transiently over the infinite bosom of Night, and did but deform and hide from us its purely transparent, eternal deeps. So likewise have they spoken and sung as if Silence were the grand epitome and complete sum-total of all Harmony; and Death, what mortals call Death, properly the beginning of Life. Under such figures, since except in figures there is no speaking of the Invisible, have men endeavoured to express a great Truth;—a Truth, in our Times, as nearly as is perhaps

possible, forgotten by the most; which nevertheless continues forever true, forever all-important, and will one day, under new figures, be again brought home to the bosoms of all.

But, indeed, in a far lower sense, the rudest mind has still some intimation of the greatness there is in Mystery. If Silence was made a god of by the Ancients, he still continues a government-clerk among us Moderns. To all quacks, moreover, of what sort soever, the effect of Mystery is well known: here and there some Cagliostro, even in latter days, turns it to notable account: the blockhead also, who is ambitious, and has no talent, finds sometimes in 'the talent of silence,' a kind of succedaneum. Or again, looking on the opposite side of the matter, do we not see, in the common understanding of mankind, a certain distrust, a certain contempt of what is altogether self-conscious and mechanical? As nothing that is wholly seen through has other than a trivial character; so anything professing to be great, and yet wholly to see through itself, is already known to be false, and a failure. The evil repute your 'theoretical men' stand in, the acknowledged inefficiency of 'paper constitutions,' and all that class of objects, are instances of this. Experience often repeated, and perhaps a certain instinct of something far deeper that lies under such experiences, has taught men so much. They know, beforehand, that the loud is generally the insignificant, the empty. Whatsoever can proclaim itself from the house-tops may be fit for the hawker, and for those multitudes that must needs buy of him; but for any deeper use, might as well continue unproclaimed. Observe too, how the converse of the propo-

sition holds; how the insignificant, the empty, is usually the loud; and, after the manner of a drum, is loud even because of its emptiness. The uses of some Patent Dinner Calefactor can be bruited abroad over the whole world in the course of the first winter; those of the Printing Press are not so well seen into for the first three centuries: the passing of the Select-Vestries Bill raises more noise and hopeful expectancy among mankind, than did the promulgation of the Christian Religion. Again, and again, we say, the great, the creative and enduring is ever a secret to itself; only the small, the barren and transient is otherwise.

If we now, with a practical medical view, examine, by this same test of Unconsciousness, the Condition of our own Era, and of man's Life therein, the diagnosis we arrive at is nowise of a flattering sort. The state of Society in our days is, of all possible states, the least an unconscious one: this is specially the Era when all manner of Inquiries into what was once the unfelt, involuntary sphere of man's existence, find their place, and as it were occupy the whole domain of thought. What, for example, is all this that we hear, for the last generation or two, about the Improvement of the Age, the Spirit of the Age, Destruction of Prejudice, Progress of the Species, and the March of Intellect, but an unhealthy state of self-sentience, self-survey; the precursor and prognostic of still worse health? That Intellect do march, if possible at double-quick time, is very desirable; nevertheless why should she turn round at every stride, and cry: See you what a stride I have taken! Such a marching of Intellect is distinctly of the spavined kind;

what the Jockeys call 'all action and no go.' Or at best, if we examine well, it is the marching of that gouty Patient, whom his Doctors had clapt on a metal floor artificially heated to the searing point, so that he was obliged to march, and marched with a vengeance—nowhither. Intellect did not awaken for the first time yesterday; but has been under way from Noah's Flood downwards: greatly her best progress, moreover, was in the old times, when she said nothing about it. In those same 'dark ages,' Intellect (metaphorically as well as literally) could invent *glass*, which now she has enough ado to grind into *spectacles*. Intellect built not only Churches, but a Church, *the* Church, based on this firm Earth, yet reaching up, and leading up, as high as Heaven; and now it is all she can do to keep its doors bolted, that there be no tearing of the Surplices, no robbery of the Alms-box. She built a Senate-house likewise, glorious in its kind; and now it costs her a wellnigh mortal effort to sweep it clear of vermin, and get the roof made rain-tight.

But the truth is, with Intellect, as with most other things, we are now passing from that first or boastful stage of Self-sentience into the second or painful one: out of these often asseverated declarations that 'our system is in high order,' we come now, by natural sequence, to the melancholy conviction that it is altogether the reverse. Thus, for instance, in the matter of Government, the period of the 'Invaluable Constitution' must be followed by a Reform Bill; to laudatory De Lolmes succeed objurgatory Benthams. At any rate, what Treatises on the Social Contract, on the Elective Franchise, the Rights of Man, the Rights of Property,

Codifications, Institutions, Constitutions, have we not, for long years, groaned under! Or again, with a wider survey, consider those Essays on Man, Thoughts on Man, Inquiries concerning Man; not to mention Evidences of the Christian Faith, Theories of Poetry, Considerations on the Origin of Evil, which during the last century have accumulated on us to a frightful extent. Never since the beginning of Time was there, that we hear or read of, so intensely self-conscious a Society. Our whole relations to the Universe and to our fellow man have become an Inquiry, a Doubt: nothing will go on of its own accord, and do its function quietly; but all things must be probed into, the whole working of man's world be anatomically studied. Alas, anatomically studied, that it may be medically aided! Till at length, indeed, we have come to such a pass, that except in this same *medicine*, with its artifices and appliances, few can so much as imagine any strength or hope to remain for us. The whole Life of Society must now be carried on by drugs: doctor after doctor appears with his nostrum, of Co-operative Societies, Universal Suffrage, Cottage-and-Cow systems, Repression of Population, Vote by Ballot. To such height has the dyspepsia of Society reached; as indeed the constant grinding internal pain, or from time to time the mad spasmodic throes, of all Society do otherwise too mournfully indicate.

Far be it from us to attribute, as some unwise persons do, the disease itself to this unhappy sensation that there is a disease! The Encyclopedists did not produce the troubles of France; but the troubles of France produced the Encyclopedists, and much else. The Self-consciousness is the symptom merely; nay, it is also the

attempt towards cure. We record the fact, without special censure; not wondering that Society should feel itself, and in all ways complain of aches and twinges, for it has suffered enough. Napoleon was but a Job's-comforter when he told his wounded Staff-officer, twice unhorsed by cannon-balls, and with half his limbs blown to pieces: "*Vous vous écoutèz trop !*".

On the outward, as it were Physical diseases of Society, it were beside our purpose to insist here. These are diseases which he who runs may read; and sorrow over, with or without hope. Wealth has accumulated itself into masses; and Poverty, also in accumulation enough, lies impassably separated from it; opposed, uncommunicating, like forces in positive and negative poles. The gods of this lower world sit aloft on glittering thrones, less happy than Epicurus' gods, but as indolent, as impotent; while the boundless living chaos of Ignorance and Hunger welters terrific, in its dark fury, under their feet. How much among us might be likened to a whited sepulchre; outwardly all pomp and strength; but inwardly full of horror and despair and dead men's bones! Iron highways, with their wains firewinged, are uniting all ends of the firm Land; quays and moles, with their innumerable stately fleets, tame the Ocean into our pliant bearer of burdens; Labour's thousand arms, of sinew and of metal, all-conquering everywhere, from the tops of the mountain down to the depths of the mine and the caverns of the sea, ply unweariedly for the service of man: yet man remains unserved. He has subdued this Planet, his habitation and inheritance; yet reaps no profit from the victory. Sad to look upon: in the highest stage of civilization, nine-tenths of mankind must struggle

in the lowest battle of savage or even animal man, the battle against Famine. Countries are rich, prosperous in all manner of increase, beyond example: but the Men of those countries are poor, needier than ever of all sustenance outward and inward; of Belief, of Knowledge, of Money, of Food. The rule, *Sic vos non vobis*, never altogether to be got rid of in men's Industry, now presses with such incubus weight, that Industry must shake it off, or utterly be strangled under it; and, alas, can as yet but gasp and rave, and aimlessly struggle, like one in the final deliration. Thus Change, or the inevitable approach of Change, is manifest everywhere. In one Country we have seen lava-torrents of fever-frenzy envelope all things; Government succeed Government, like the phantasms of a dying brain. In another Country, we can even now see, in maddest alternation, the Peasant governed by such guidance as this: To labour earnestly one month in raising wheat, and the next month labour earnestly in burning it. So that Society, were it not by nature immortal, and its death ever a new-birth, might appear, as it does in the eyes of some, to be sick to dissolution, and even now writhing in its last agony. Sick enough we must admit it to be, with disease enough, a whole nosology of diseases; wherein he perhaps is happiest that is not called to prescribe as physician;—wherein, however, one small piece of policy, that of summoning the Wisest in the Commonwealth, by the sole method yet known or thought of, to come together and with their whole soul consult for it, might, but for late tedious experiences, have seemed unquestionable enough.

But leaving this, let us rather look within, into the

Spiritual condition of Society, and see what aspects and prospects offer themselves there. For, after all, it is there properly that the secret and origin of the whole is to be sought: the Physical derangements of Society are but the image and impress of its Spiritual; while the heart continues sound, all other sickness is superficial, and temporary. False Action is the fruit of false Speculation; let the spirit of Society be free and strong, that is to say, let true Principles inspire the members of Society, then neither can disorders accumulate in its Practice; each disorder will be promptly, faithfully inquired into, and remedied as it arises. But alas, with us the Spiritual condition of Society is no less sickly than the Physical. Examine man's internal world, in any of its social relations and performances, here too all seems diseased self-consciousness, collision, and mutually-destructive struggle. Nothing acts from within outwards in undivided healthy force; everything lies impotent, lamed, its force turned inwards, and painfully 'listens to itself.'

To begin with our highest Spiritual function, with Religion, we might ask, Whither has Religion now fled? Of Churches and their establishments we here say nothing; nor of the unhappy domains of Unbelief, and how innumerable men, blinded in their minds, must 'live without God in the world;' but, taking the fairest side of the matter, we ask, What is the nature of that same Religion, which still lingers in the hearts of the few who are called, and call themselves, specially the Religious? Is it a healthy religion, vital, unconscious of itself; that shines forth spontaneously in doing of the Work, or even in preaching of the Word? Unhappily,

no. Instead of heroic martyr Conduct, and inspired and soul-inspiring Eloquence, whereby Religion itself were brought home to our living bosoms, to live and reign there, we have 'Discourses on the Evidences,' endeavouring, with smallest result, to make it probable that such a thing as Religion exists. The most enthusiastic Evangelicals do not preach a Gospel, but keep describing how it should and might be preached: to awaken the sacred fire of faith, as by a sacred contagion, is not their endeavour; but, at most, to describe how Faith shews and acts, and scientifically distinguish true Faith from false. Religion, like all else, is conscious of itself, listens to itself; it becomes less and less creative, vital; more and more mechanical. Considered as a whole, the Christian Religion, of late ages has been continually dissipating itself into Metaphysics; and threatens now to disappear, as some rivers do, in deserts of barren sand.

Of Literature, and its deep-seated, wide-spread maladies, why speak? Literature, is but a branch of Religion, and always participates in its character: however, in our time, it is the only branch that still shews any greenness; and, as some think, must one day become the main stem. Now, apart from the subterranean and tartarean regions of Literature;—leaving out of view the frightful, scandalous statistics of Puffing, the mystery of Slander, Falsehood, Hatred, and other convulsion-work of rabid Imbecility, and all that has rendered Literature on that side a perfect 'Babylon the mother of Abominations,' in very deed, making the world 'drunk' with the wine of her iniquity;—forgetting all this, let us look only to the regions of the upper air; to

such Literature as can be said to have some attempt towards truth in it, some tone of music, and if it be not poetical, to hold of the poetical. Among other characteristics, is not this manifest enough: that it knows itself? Spontaneous devotedness to the object, being wholly possessed by the object, what we can call Inspiration, has wellnigh ceased to appear in Literature. Which melodious Singer forgets that he is singing melodiously? We have not the love of greatness, but the love of the love of greatness. Hence infinite Affectations, Distractions; in every case inevitable Error. Consider, for one example, this peculiarity of Modern Literature, the sin that has been named View-hunting. In our elder writers, there are no paintings of scenery for its own sake; no euphuistic gallantries with Nature, but a constant heart-love for her, a constant dwelling in communion with her. View-hunting, with so much else that is of kin to it, first came decisively into action through the *Sorrows of Werter*; which wonderful Performance, indeed, may in many senses be regarded as the progenitor of all that has since become popular in Literature; whereof, in so far as concerns spirit and tendency, it still offers the most instructive image; for nowhere, except in its own country, above all in the mind of its illustrious Author, has it yet fallen wholly obsolete. Scarcely ever, till that late epoch, did any worshipper of Nature become entirely aware that he was worshipping, much to his own credit; and think of saying to himself: Come let us make a description! Intolerable enough: when every puny whipster draws out his pencil, and insists on painting you a scene; so that the instant you discern such a thing as 'wavy outline,'

'mirror of the lake,' 'stern headland,' or the like, in any Book, you must timorously hasten on; and scarcely the Author of Waverley himself can tempt you not to skip.

Nay, is not the diseased self-conscious state of Literature disclosed in this one fact, which lies so near us here, the prevalence of Reviewing! Sterne's wish for a reader 'that would give up the reins of his imagina-'tion into his author's hands, and be pleased he knew 'not why, and cared not wherefore,' might lead him a long journey now. Indeed, for our best class of readers, the chief pleasure, a very stinted one, is this same knowing of the Why; which many a Kames and Bossu has been, ineffectually enough, endeavouring to teach us: till at last these also have laid down their trade; and now your Reviewer is a mere *taster;* who tastes, and says, by the evidence of such palate, such tongue, as he has got, It is good, It is bad. Was it thus that the French carried out certain inferior creatures on their Algerine Expedition, to taste the wells for them, and try whether they were poisoned? Far be it from us to disparage our own craft, whereby we have our living! Only we must note these things: that Reviewing spreads with strange vigour; that such a man as Byron reckons the Reviewer and the Poet equal; that at the last Leipzig Fair, there was advertised a Review of Reviews. By and by it will be found that all Literature has become one boundless self-devouring Review; and as in London routs, we have to *do* nothing, but only to *see* others do nothing.—Thus does Literature also, like a sick thing, superabundantly 'listen to itself.'

No less is this unhealthy symptom manifest, if we

cast a glance on our Philosophy, on the character of our speculative Thinking. Nay already, as above hinted, the mere existence and necessity of a Philosophy is an evil. Man is sent hither not to question, but to work! 'the end of man,' it was long ago written, 'is an Action, not a Thought.' In the perfect state, all Thought were but the picture and inspiring symbol of Action; Philosophy, except as Poetry and Religion, had no being. And yet how, in this imperfect state, can it be avoided, can it be dispensed with? Man stands as in the centre of Nature; his fraction of Time encircled by Eternity, his handbreadth of Space encircled by Infinitude: how shall he forbear asking himself, What am I; and Whence; and Whither? How too, except in slight partial hints, in kind asseverations and assurances, such as a mother quiets her fretfully inquisitive child with, shall he get answer to such inquiries?

The disease of Metaphysics, accordingly, is a perennial one. In all ages, those questions of Death and Immortality, Origin of Evil, Freedom and Necessity, must, under new forms, anew make their appearance; ever, from time to time, must the attempt to shape for ourselves some Theorem of the Universe be repeated. And ever unsuccessfully: for what Theorem of the Infinite can the Finite render complete? We, the whole species of Mankind, and our whole existence and history, are but a floating speck in the illimitable ocean of the All; yet *in* that ocean; indissoluble portion thereof; partaking of its infinite tendencies; borne this way and that by its deep-swelling tides, and grand ocean currents;—of which what faintest chance is there that we should ever exhaust the significance, ascertain the goings

and comings? A region of Doubt, therefore, hovers forever in the background; in Action alone can we have certainty. Nay properly Doubt is the indispensable inexhaustible material whereon Action works, which Action has to fashion into Certainty and Reality; only on a canvass of Darkness, such is man's way of being, could the many-coloured picture of our Life paint itself and shine.

Thus if our eldest system of Metaphysics is as old as the *Book of Genesis*, our latest is that of Mr. Thomas Hope, published only within the current year. It is a chronic malady that of Metaphysics, as we said, and perpetually recurs on us. At the utmost, there is a better and a worse in it; a stage of convalescence, and a stage of relapse with new sickness: these forever succeed each other, as is the nature of all Life-movement here below. The first, or convalescent stage, we might also name that of Dogmatical or Constructive Metaphysics; when the mind constructively endeavours to scheme out, and assert for itself an actual Theorem of the Universe, and therewith for a time rests satisfied. The second or sick stage might be called that of Sceptical or Inquisitory Metaphysics; when the mind having widened its sphere of vision, the existing Theorem of the Universe no longer answers the phenomena, no longer yields contentment; but must be torn in pieces, and certainty anew sought for in the endless realms of denial. All Theologies and sacred Cosmogonies belong, in some measure, to the first class; in all Pyrrhonism, from Pyrrho down to Hume and the innumerable disciples of Hume, we have instances enough of the second. In the former, so far as it affords satisfaction, a tempo-

rary anodyne to doubt, an arena for wholesome action, there may be much good; indeed in this case, it holds rather of Poetry than of Metaphysics, might be called Inspiration rather than Speculation. The latter is Metaphysics proper; a pure, unmixed, though from time to time a necessary evil.

For truly, if we look into it, there is no more fruitless endeavour than this same, which the Metaphysician proper toils in: to educe Conviction out of Negation. How, by merely testing and rejecting what is not, shall we ever attain knowledge of what is? Metaphysical Speculation, as it begins in No or Nothingness, so it must needs end in Nothingness; circulates and must circulate in endless vortices; creating, swallowing—itself. Our being is made up of Light and Darkness, the Light resting on the Darkness, and balancing it; everywhere there is Dualism, Equipoise; a perpetual Contradiction dwells in us: "where shall I place myself to escape from my own shadow?" Consider it well, Metaphysics is the attempt of the mind to rise above the mind; to environ, and shut in, or as we say, *comprehend* the mind. Hopeless struggle, for the wisest, as for the foolishest! What strength of sinew, or athletic skill, will enable the stoutest athlete to fold his own body in his arms, and, by lifting, lift up *himself?* The Irish Saint swam the Channel 'carrying his head in his teeth:' but the feat has never been imitated.

That this is the age of Metaphysics, in the proper, or sceptical Inquisitory sense; that there was a necessity for its being such an age, we regard as our indubitable misfortune. From many causes, the arena of free Activity has long been narrowing, that of sceptical Inquiry

becoming more and more universal, more and more perplexing. The Thought conducts not to the Deed; but in boundless chaos, self-devouring, engenders monstrosities, fantasms, fire-breathing chimeras. Profitable Speculation were this: What is to be done; and How is it to be done? But with us not so much as the What can be got sight of. For some generations, all Philosophy has been a painful, captious, hostile question towards everything in the Heaven above, in the Earth beneath: Why art thou there? Till at length it has come to pass that the worth and authenticity of all things seems dubitable or deniable: our best effort must be unproductively spent not in working, but in ascertaining our mere Whereabout, and so much as whether we are to work at all. Doubt, which, as was said, ever hangs in the background of our world, has now become our middle-ground and foreground; whereon, for the time, no fair Life-picture can be painted, but only the dark air-canvass itself flow round us, bewildering and benighting.

Nevertheless, doubt as we will, man is actually Here; not to ask questions, but to do work: in this time, as in all times, it must be the heaviest evil for him, if his faculty of Action lie dormant, and only that of sceptical Inquiry exert itself. Accordingly, whoever looks abroad upon the world, comparing the Past with the Present, may find that the practical condition of man, in these days, is one of the saddest; burdened with miseries which are in a considerable degree peculiar. In no time was man's life what he calls a happy one; in no time can it be so. A perpetual dream there has been of Paradises, and some luxurious Lubberland,

where the brooks should run wine, and the trees bend with ready-baked viands; but it was a dream merely; an impossible dream. Suffering, contradiction, error, have their quite perennial, and even indispensable, abode in this Earth. Is not labour the inheritance of man? And what labour for the present is joyous, and not grievous? Labour, effort, is the very interruption of that ease, which man foolishly enough fancies to be his happiness; and yet without labour there were no ease, no rest, so much as conceivable. Thus Evil, what we call Evil, must ever exist while man exists: Evil, in the widest sense we can give it, is precisely the dark, disordered material out of which man's Freewill has to create an edifice of order, and Good. Ever must Pain urge us to Labour; and only in free Effort can any blessedness be imagined for us.

But if man has, in all ages, had enough to encounter, there has, in most civilised ages, been an inward force vouchsafed him, whereby the pressure of things outward might be withstood. Obstruction abounded; but Faith also was not wanting. It is by Faith that man removes mountains: while he had Faith, his limbs might be wearied with toiling, his back galled with bearing; but the heart within him was peaceable and resolved. In the thickest gloom there burnt a lamp to guide him. If he struggled and suffered, he felt that it even should be so; knew for what he was suffering and struggling. Faith gave him an inward Willingness; a world of Strength wherewith to front a world of Difficulty. The true wretchedness lies here: that the Difficulty remain and the Strength be lost; that Pain cannot relieve itself in free Effort; that we have the Labour, and want

the Willingness. Faith strengthens us, enlightens us, for all endeavours and endurances; with Faith we can do all, and dare all, and life itself has a thousand times been joyfully given away. But the sum of man's misery is even this, that he feel himself crushed under the Juggernaut wheels, and know that Juggernaut is no divinity, but a dead mechanical idol.

Now this is specially the misery which has fallen on man in our Era. Belief, Faith has wellnigh vanished from the world. The youth on awakening in this wondrous Universe, no longer finds a competent theory of its wonders. Time was, when if he asked himself, What is man, What are the duties of man? the answer stood ready written for him. But now the ancient 'ground-plan of the All' belies itself when brought into contact with reality; Mother Church has, to the most, become a superannuated Stepmother, whose lessons go disregarded; or are spurned at, and scornfully gainsayed. For young Valour and thirst of Action no ideal Chivalry invites to heroism, prescribes what is heroic: the old ideal of Manhood has grown obsolete, and the new is still invisible to us, and we grope after it in darkness, one clutching this phantom, another that; Werterism, Byronism, even Brummelism, each has its day. For Contemplation and love of Wisdom no Cloister now opens its religious shades; the Thinker must, in all senses, wander homeless, too often aimless, looking up to a Heaven which is dead for him, round to an Earth which is deaf. Action, in those old days, was easy, was voluntary, for the divine worth of human things lay acknowledged; Speculation was wholesome, for it ranged itself as the handmaid of Action; what could

not so range itself died out by its natural death, by neglect. Loyalty still hallowed obedience, and made rule noble; there was still something to be loyal to: the Godlike stood embodied under many a symbol in men's interests and business; the Finite shadowed forth the Infinite; Eternity looked through Time. The Life of man was encompassed and overcanopied by a glory of Heaven, even as his dwelling-place by the azure vault.

How changed in these new days! Truly may it be said, the Divinity has withdrawn from the Earth; or veils himself in that wide-wasting Whirlwind of a departing Era, wherein the fewest can discern his goings. Not Godhead, but an iron, ignoble circle of Necessity embraces all things; binds the youth of these times into a sluggish thrall, or else exasperates him into a rebel. Heroic Action is paralyzed; for what worth now remains unquestionable with him? At the fervid period when his whole nature cries aloud for Action, there is nothing sacred under whose banner he can act; the course and kind and conditions of free Action are all but undiscoverable. Doubt storms in on him through every avenue; inquiries of the deepest, painfullest sort must be engaged with; and the invincible energy of young years waste itself in sceptical, suicidal cavillings; in passionate 'questionings of Destiny,' whereto no answer will be returned.

For men, in whom the old perennial principle of Hunger (be it Hunger of the poor Day-drudge who stills it with eighteenpence a-day, or of the ambitious Place-hunter who can nowise still it with so little) suffices to fill up existence, the case is bad; but not the worst. These men have an aim, such as it is; and can steer

towards it, with chagrin enough truly; yet, as their hands are kept full, without desperation. Unhappier are they to whom a higher instinct has been given; who struggle to be persons, not machines; to whom the Universe is not a warehouse, or at best fancy-bazaar, but a mystic temple and hall of doom. For such men there lie properly two courses open. The lower, yet still an estimable class, take up with worn-out Symbols of the Godlike; keep trimming and trucking between these and Hypocrisy, purblindly enough, miserably enough. A numerous intermediate class end in Denial; and form a theory that there is no theory; that nothing is certain in the world, except this fact of Pleasure being pleasant; so they try to realize what trifling modicum of Pleasure they can come at, and to live contented therewith, winking hard. Of these we speak not here; but only of the second nobler class, who also have dared to say No, and cannot yet say Yea; but feel that in the No they dwell as in a Golgotha, where life enters not, where peace is not appointed them. Hard, for most part, is the fate of such men; the harder the nobler they are. In dim forecastings, wrestles within them the 'Divine Idea of the World,' yet will nowhere visibly reveal itself. They have to realize a Worship for themselves, or live unworshipping. The Godlike has vanished from the world; and they, by the strong cry of their soul's agony, like true wonder-workers, must again evoke its presence. This miracle is their appointed task; which they must accomplish, or die wretchedly: this miracle has been accomplished by such; but not in our land; our land yet knows not of it. Behold a Byron, in

melodious tones, 'cursing his day:' he mistakes earthborn passionate Desire for heaven-inspired Freewill; without heavenly loadstar, rushes madly into the dance of meteoric lights that hover on the mad Mahlstrom; and goes down among its eddies. Hear a Shelley filling the earth with inarticulate wail; like the infinite, inarticulate grief and weeping of forsaken infants. A noble Friedrich Schlegel, stupified in that fearful loneliness, as of a silenced battle-field, flies back to Catholicism; as a child might to its slain mother's bosom, and cling there. In lower regions, how many a poor Hazlitt must wander on God's verdant earth, like the Unblest on burning deserts; passionately dig wells, and draw up only the dry quicksand; believe that he is seeking Truth, yet only wrestle among endless Sophisms, doing desperate battle as with spectre-hosts; and die and make no sign!

To the better order of such minds any mad joy of Denial has long since ceased: the problem is not now to deny, but to ascertain and perform. Once in destroying the False, there was a certain inspiration; but now the genius of Destruction has done its work, there is now nothing more to destroy. The doom of the Old has long been pronounced, and irrevocable; the Old has passed away: but, alas, the New appears not in its stead; the Time is still in pangs of travail with the New. Man has walked by the light of conflagrations, and amid the sound of falling cities; and now there is darkness, and long watching till it be morning. The voice even of the faithful can but exclaim: 'As yet 'struggles the twelfth hour of the Night: birds of dark-

ss are on the wing, spectres uproar, the dead walk, the living dream.—Thou, Eternal Providence, wilt cause the 'day to dawn!'*

Such being the condition, temporal and spiritual, of the world at our Epoch, can we wonder that the world 'listens to itself,' and struggles and writhes, everywhere externally and internally, like a thing in pain? Nay, is not even this unhealthy action of the world's Organization, if the symptom of universal disease, yet also the symptom and sole means of restoration and cure? The effort of Nature, exerting her medicative force to cast out foreign impediments, and once more become One, become whole? In Practice, still more in Opinion, which is the precursor and prototype of Practice, there must needs be collision, convulsion; much has to be ground away. Thought must needs be Doubt and Inquiry, before it can again be Affirmation and Sacred Precept. Innumerable 'Philosophies of Man,' contending in boundless hubbub, must annihilate each other, before an inspired Poesy and Faith for Man can fashion itself together.

From this stunning hubbub, a true Babylonish confusion of tongues, we have here selected two Voices; less as objects of praise or condemnation, than as signs how far the confusion has reached, what prospect there is of its abating. Friedrich Schlegel's *Lectures*, delivered at Dresden, and Mr. Hope's *Essay*, published in London, are the latest utterances of European Speculation: far asunder in external place, they stand at a still wider

* Jean Paul's *Hesperus*. *Vorrede*.

distance in inward purport; are, indeed, so opposite a yet so cognate that they may, in many senses, represent the two Extremes of our whole modern system of Thought; and be said to include between them all the Metaphysical Philosophies, so often alluded to here, which, of late times, from France, Germany, England, have agitated and almost overwhelmed us. Both in regard to matter and to form, the relation of these two Works is significant enough.

Speaking first of their cognate qualities, let us remark, not without emotion, one quite extraneous point of agreement; the fact that the Writers of both have departed from this world; they have now finished their search, and had all doubts resolved: while we listen to the voice, the tongue that uttered it has gone silent for ever. But the fundamental, all-pervading similarity lies in this circumstance, well worthy of being noted, that both these Philosophies are of the Dogmatic, or Constructive sort: each in its way is a kind of Genesis; an endeavour to bring the Phenomena of man's Universe once more under some theoretic Scheme: in both there is a decided principle of unity; they strive after a result which shall be positive; their aim is not to question, but to establish. This, especially if we consider with what comprehensive concentrated force it is here exhibited, forms a new feature in such works.

Under all other aspects, there is the most irreconcilable opposition; a staring contrariety, such as might provoke contrasts were there far fewer points of comparison. If Schlegel's Work is the apotheosis of Spiritualism; Hope's again is the apotheosis of Materialism: in the one, all Matter is evaporated into a Phenomenon,

and terrestrial Life itself, with its whole doings and showings, held out as a Disturbance (*Zerrüttung*) produced by the *Zeitgeist* (Spirit of Time); in the other, Matter is distilled and sublimated into some semblance of Divinity: the one regards Space and Time as mere forms of man's mind, and without external existence or reality; the other supposes Space and Time to be 'incessantly created,' and rayed in upon us like a sort of 'gravitation.' Such is their difference in respect of purport; no less striking is it in respect of manner, talent, success, and all outward characteristics. Thus, if in Schlegel we have to admire the power of Words, in Hope we stand astonished, it might almost be said, at the want of an articulate Language. To Schlegel his Philosophic Speech is obedient, dexterous, exact, like a promptly-ministering genius; his names are so clear, so precise and vivid, that they almost (sometimes altogether) become things for him: with Hope there is no Philosophical Speech; but a painful, confused, stammering, and struggling after such; or the tongue, as in dotish forgetfulness, maunders, low, longwinded, and speaks not the word intended, but another; so that here the scarcely intelligible, in these endless convolutions, becomes the wholly unreadable; and often we could ask, as that mad pupil did of his tutor in Philosophy, "But whether is Virtue a fluid, then, or a gas?" If the fact, that Schlegel, in the city of Dresden, could find audience for such high discourse, may excite our envy; this other fact, that a person of strong powers, skilled in English Thought and master of its Dialect, could write the *Origin and Prospects of Man*, may painfully remind us of the reproach, that England has now no language for Meditation; that England, the

most calculative, is the least meditative, of all civilized countries.

It is not our purpose to offer any criticism of Schlegel's Book; in such limits as were possible here, we should despair of communicating even the faintest image of its significance. To the mass of readers, indeed, both among the Germans themselves, and still more elsewhere, it nowise addresses itself, and may lie for ever sealed. We point it out as a remarkable document of the Time and of the Man; can recommend it, moreover, to all earnest Thinkers, as a work deserving their best regard; a work full of deep meditation, wherein the infinite mystery of Life, if not represented, is decisively recognised. Of Schlegel himself, and his character, and spiritual history, we can profess no thorough or final understanding; yet enough to make us view him with admiration and pity, nowise with harsh contemptuous censure; and must say, with clearest persuasion, that the outcry of his being 'a renegade,' and so forth, is but like other such outcries, a judgment where there was neither jury, nor evidence, nor judge. The candid reader, in this Book itself, to say nothing of all the rest, will find traces of a high, far-seeing, earnest spirit, to whom 'Austrian Pensions,' and the Kaiser's crown, and Austria altogether, were but a light matter to the finding and vitally appropriating of Truth. Let us respect the sacred mystery of a Person; rush not irreverently into man's Holy of Holies! Were the lost little one, as we said already, found 'sucking its dead mother, on the field of carnage,' could it be other than a spectacle for tears? A solemn mournful feeling comes over us when we see this last Work of Friedrich Schlegel, the unwearied

seeker, end abruptly in the middle; and, as if he *had not* yet found, as if emblematically of much, end with an '*Aber*—,' with a 'But—!' This was the last word that came from the Pen of Friedrich Schlegel: about eleven at night he wrote it down, and there paused sick; at one in the morning, Time for him had merged itself in Eternity; he was, as we say, no more.

Still less can we attempt any criticism of Mr. Hope's new Book of Genesis. Indeed, under any circumstances, criticism of it were now impossible. Such an utterance could only be responded to in peals of laughter; and laughter sounds hollow and hideous through the vaults of the dead. Of this monstrous Anomaly, where all sciences are heaped and huddled together, and the principles of all are, with a childlike innocence, plied hither and thither, or wholly abolished in case of need; where the First Cause is figured as a huge Circle, with nothing to do but radiate 'gravitation' towards its centre; and so construct a Universe, wherein all, from the lowest cucumber with its coolness, up to the highest seraph with his love, were but 'gravitation,' direct or reflex, 'in more or less central globes,'—what can we say, except, with sorrow and shame, that it could have originated nowhere save in England? It is a general agglomerate of all facts, notions, whims, and observations, as they lie in the brain of an English gentleman; as an English gentleman, of unusual thinking power, is led to fashion them, in his schools and in his world: all these thrown into the crucible, and if not fused, yet soldered or conglutinated with boundless patience; and now tumbled out here, heterogeneous, amorphous, unspeakable, a world's wonder. Most melancholy must

we name the whole business; full of long-continued thought, earnestness, loftiness of mind; not without glances into the Deepest, a constant fearless endeavour after truth; and with all this nothing accomplished, but the perhaps absurdest Book written in our century by a thinking man. A shameful Abortion; which, however, need not now be smothered or mangled, for it is already dead; only, in our love and sorrowing reverence for the writer of *Anastasius*, and the heroic seeker of Light, though not bringer thereof, let it be buried and forgotten.

For ourselves, the loud discord which jars in these two Works, in innumerable works of the like import, and generally in all the Thought and Action of this period, does not any longer utterly confuse us. Unhappy who, in such a time, felt not, at all conjunctures, ineradicably in his heart the knowledge that a God made this Universe, and a Demon not! And shall Evil always prosper, then? Out of all Evil comes Good; and no Good that is possible but shall one day be real. Deep and sad as is our feeling that we stand yet in the bodeful Night; equally deep, indestructible is our assurance that the Morning also will not fail. Nay, already, as we look round, streaks of a dayspring are in the east: it is dawning; when the time shall be fulfilled, it will be day. The progress of man towards higher and nobler developments of whatever is highest and noblest in him, lies not only prophesied to Faith, but now written to the eye of Observation, so that he who runs may read.

One great step of progress, for example, we should say, in actual circumstances, was this same; the clear

ascertainment that we are in progress. About the grand Course of Providence, and his final Purposes with us, we can know nothing, or almost nothing: man begins in darkness, ends in darkness; mystery is everywhere around us and in us, under our feet, among our hands. Nevertheless so much has become evident to every one, that this wondrous Mankind is advancing somewhither; that at least all human things are, have been, and for ever will be, in Movement and Change;—as, indeed, for beings that exist in Time, by virtue of Time, and are made of Time, might have been long since understood. In some provinces, it is true, as in Experimental Science, this discovery is an old one; but in most others it belongs wholly to these latter days. How often, in former ages, by eternal Creeds, eternal Forms of Government, and the like, has it been attempted, fiercely enough, and with destructive violence, to chain the Future under the Past; and say to the Providence, whose ways with man are mysterious, and through the great deep: Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther! A wholly insane attempt; and for man himself, could it prosper, the frightfullest of all enchantments, a very Life-in-Death. Man's task here below, the destiny of every individual man, is to be in turns Apprentice and Workman; or say rather, Scholar, Teacher, Discoverer: by nature he has a strength for learning, for imitating; but also a strength for acting, for knowing on his own account. Are we not in a World seen to be Infinite; the relations lying closest together modified by those latest-discovered, and lying farthest asunder? Could you ever spell-bind man into a Scholar merely, so that he had nothing to discover, to correct; could you ever establish a Theory of the Uni-

verse that were entire, unimprovable, and which needed only to be got by heart; man then were spiritually defunct, the Species we now name Man had ceased to exist. But the gods, kinder to us than we are to ourselves, have forbidden such suicidal acts. As Phlogiston is displaced by Oxygen, and the Epicycles of Ptolemy by the Ellipses of Kepler; so does Paganism give place to Catholicism, Tyranny to Monarchy, and Feudalism to Representative Government,—where also the process does not stop. Perfection of Practice, like completeness of Opinion, is always approaching, never arrived; Truth, in the words of Schiller, *immer wird, nie ist;* never *is*, always *is a-being*.

Sad, truly, were our condition did we know but this, that Change is universal and inevitable. Launched into a dark shoreless sea of Pyrrhonism, what would remain for us but to sail aimless, hopeless; or make madly merry, while the devouring Death had not yet engulfed us? As, indeed, we have seen many, and still see many do. Nevertheless so stands it not. The venerator of the Past (and to what pure heart is the Past, in that 'moonlight of memory,' other than sad and holy?) sorrows not over its departure, as one utterly bereaved. The true Past departs not, nothing that was worthy in the Past departs; no Truth or Goodness realized by man ever dies, or can die; but is all still here, and, recognised or not, lives and works through endless changes. If all things, to speak in the German dialect, are discerned by us, and exist for us, in an element of Time, and therefore of Mortality and Mutability; yet Time itself reposes on Eternity: the truly Great and Transcendental has its basis and substance in Eternity; stands revealed

to us as Eternity in a vesture of Time. Thus in all Poetry, Worship, Art, Society, as one form passes into another, nothing is lost: it is but the superficial, as it were the *body* only, that grows obsolete and dies; under the mortal body lies a *soul* which is immortal; which anew incarnates itself in fairer revelation; and the Present is the living sum-total of the whole Past.

In Change, therefore, there is nothing terrible, nothing supernatural: on the contrary, it lies in the very essence of our lot, and life in this world. To-day is not yesterday: we ourselves change; how can our Works and Thoughts, if they are always to be the fittest, continue always the same? Change, indeed, is painful; yet ever needful: and if Memory have its force and worth, so also has Hope. Nay, if we look well to it, what is all Derangement, and necessity of great Change, in itself such an evil, but the product simply of *increased resources* which the old *methods* can no longer administer; of new wealth which the old coffers will no longer contain? What is it, for example, that in our own day bursts asunder the bonds of ancient Political Systems, and perplexes all Europe with the fear of Change, but even this: the increase of social resources, which the old social methods will no longer sufficiently administer? The new omnipotence of the Steam-engine is hewing asunder quite other mountains than the physical. Have not our economical distresses, those barnyard Conflagrations themselves, the frightfullest madness of our mad epoch, their rise also in what is a real increase: increase of Men; of human Force; properly, in such a Planet as ours, the most precious of all increases? It is true again, the ancient methods of administration will no longer

suffice. Must the indomitable millions, full of old Saxon energy and fire, lie cooped up in this Western Nook, choking one another, as in a Blackhole of Calcutta, while a whole fertile untenanted Earth, desolate for want of the ploughshare, cries: Come and till me, come and reap me? If the ancient Captains can no longer yield guidance, new must be sought after: for the difficulty lies not in nature, but in artifice: the European Calcutta-Blackhole has no walls but air ones, and paper ones.—So too, Scepticism itself, with its innumerable mischiefs, what is it but the sour fruit of a most blessed increase, that of Knowledge; a fruit, too, that will not always continue *sour*?

In fact, much as we have said and mourned about the unproductive prevalence of Metaphysics, it was not without some insight into the use that lies in them. Metaphysical Speculation, if a necessary evil, is the forerunner of much good. The fever of Scepticism must needs burn itself out, and burn out thereby the Impurities that caused it; then again will there be clearness, health. The principle of life, which now struggles painfully, in the outer, thin, and barren domain of the Conscious or Mechanical, may then withdraw into its inner sanctuaries, its abysses of mystery and miracle; withdraw deeper than ever into that domain of the Unconscious, by nature infinite and inexhaustible; and creatively work there. From that mystic region, and from that alone, all wonders, all Poesies, and Religions, and Social Systems have proceeded: the like wonders, and greater and higher, lie slumbering there; and, brooded on by the spirit of the waters, will evolve themselves, and rise like exhalations from the Deep.

Of our modern Metaphysics, accordingly, may not this already be said, that if they have produced no Affirmation, they have destroyed much Negation? It is a disease expelling a disease: the fire of Doubt, as above hinted, consuming away the Doubtful; that so the Certain come to light, and again lie visible on the surface. English or French Metaphysics, in reference to this last stage of the speculative process, are not what we allude to here; but only the Metaphysics of the Germans. In France or England, since the days of Diderot and Hume, though all thought has been of a sceptico-metaphysical texture, so far as there was any Thought, we have seen no Metaphysics; but only more or less ineffectual questionings whether such could be. In the Pyrrhonism of Hume and the Materialism of Diderot, Logic had, as it were, overshot itself, overset itself. Now, though the athlete, to use our old figure, cannot, by much lifting, lift up his own body, he may shift it out of a laming posture, and get to stand in a free one. Such a service have German Metaphysics done for man's mind. The second sickness of Speculation has abolished both itself and the first. Friedrich Schlegel complains much of the fruitlessness, the tumult and transiency of German as of all Metaphysics; and with reason. Yet in that wide-spreading, deep-whirling vortex of Kantism, so soon metamorphosed into Fichteism, Schellingism, and then as Hegelism, and Cousinism, perhaps finally evaporated, is not this issue visible enough, That Pyrrhonism and Materialism, themselves necessary phenomena in European culture, have disappeared; and a Faith in Religion has again become possible and inevitable for the scientific mind; and the word *Free*-thinker no longer means the Denier or Caviller, but the Believer, or the Ready to

believe? Nay, in the higher Literature of Germany, there already lies, for him that can read it, the beginning of a new revelation of the Godlike; as yet unrecognised by the mass of the world; but waiting there for recognition, and sure to find it when the fit hour comes. This age also is not wholly without its Prophets.

Again, under another aspect, if Utilitarianism, or Radicalism, or the Mechanical Philosophy, or by whatever name it is called, has still its long task to do; nevertheless we can now see through it and beyond it: in the better heads, even among us English, it has become obsolete; as in other countries, it has been, in such heads, for some forty or even fifty years. What sound mind among the French, for example, now fancies that men can be governed by 'Constitutions;' by the never so cunning mechanizing of Self-interests, and all conceivable adjustments of checking and balancing; in a word, by the best possible solution of this quite insoluble and impossible problem, *Given a world of Knaves, to produce an Honesty from their united action?* Were not experiments enough of this kind tried before all Europe, and found wanting, when, in that doomsday of France, the infinite gulf of human Passion shivered asunder the thin rinds of Habit; and burst forth all-devouring, as in seas of Nether Fire? Which cunningly-devised 'Constitution,' constitutional, republican, democratic, sansculottic, could bind that raging chasm together? Were they not all burnt up, like paper as they were, in its molten eddies; and still the fire-sea raged fiercer than before? It is not by Mechanism, but by Religion; not by Self-interest, but by Loyalty, that men are governed or governable.

Remarkable it is, truly, how everywhere the eternal

fact begins again to be recognised, that there is a God-like in human affairs; that God not only made us and beholds us, but is in us and around us; that the Age of Miracles, as it ever was, now is. Such recognition we discern on all hands, and in all countries: in each country after its own fashion. In France, among the younger nobler minds, strangely enough; where, in their loud contention with the Actual and Conscious, the Ideal or Unconscious is, for the time, without exponent; where Religion means not the parent of Polity, as of all that is highest, but Polity itself; and this and the other earnest man has not been wanting, who could whisper audibly: "Go to, I will make a religion." In England still more strangely; as in all things, worthy England will have its way: by the shrieking of hysterical women, casting out of devils, and other 'gifts of the Holy Ghost.' Well might Jean Paul say, in this his twelfth hour of the Night, 'the living dream;' well might he say, 'the dead walk.' Meanwhile let us rejoice rather that so much has been seen into, were it through never so diffracting media, and never so madly distorted; that in all dialects, though but half-articulately, this high Gospel begins to be preached: Man is still Man. The genius of Mechanism, as was once before predicted, will not always sit like a choking incubus on our soul; but at length when by a new magic Word the old spell is broken, become our slave, and as familiar-spirit do all our bidding. 'We are near awakening when we dream that we dream.'

He that has an eye and a heart can even now say: Why should I falter? Light has come into the world; to such as love Light, so as Light must be loved, with a boundless all-doing, all-enduring love. For the rest, let

that vain struggle to read the mystery of the Infinite cease to harass us. It is a mystery which, through all ages, we shall only read here a line of, there another line of. Do we not already know that the name of the Infinite is GOOD, is GOD? Here on Earth we are as Soldiers, fighting in a foreign land; that understand not the plan of the campaign, and have no need to understand it; seeing well what is at our hand to be done. Let us do it like Soldiers, with submission, with courage, with a heroic joy. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.' Behind us, behind each one of us, lie Six Thousand Years of human effort, human conquest: before us is the boundless Time, with its as yet uncreated and unconquered Continents and Eldorados, which we, even we, have to conquer, to create; and from the bosom of Eternity shine for us celestial guiding stars.

'My inheritance how wide and fair!
Time is my fair seed-field, of Time I'm heir.'

GOETHE'S PORTRAIT.*

[1832.]

READER! thou here beholdest the Eidolon of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. So looks and lives, now in his eighty-third year, afar in the bright little friendly circle of Weimar, 'the clearest, most universal man of his time.' Strange enough is the cunning that resides in the ten fingers, especially what they bring to pass by pencil and pen! Him who never saw England, England now sees: from Fraser's 'Gallery' he looks forth here, wondering, doubtless, how *he* came into such a '*Lichtstrasse*, lightstreet,' or galaxy; yet with kind recognition of all neighbours, even as the moon looks kindly on lesser lights, and, were they but fish-oil cressets, or terrestrial Vauxhall stars (of clipped tin), forbids not their shining.—Nay, the very soul of the man thou canst likewise behold. Do but look well in those forty volumes of 'musical wisdom,' which, under the title of *Goethe's Werke*, Cotta of Tübingen, or Black and Young of Covent Garden,—once offer them a trifle of drink-money,—will cheerfully hand thee: greater sight, or

* FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 66.—By Stieler of Munich: the copy in Fraser's Magazine proved a total failure and involuntary caricature,—resembling, as was said at the time, a wretched old-clothesman carrying behind his back a hat which he seemed to have stolen.

more profitable, thou wilt not meet with in this generation. The German language, it is presumable, thou knowest; if not, shouldst thou undertake the study thereof for that sole end, it were well worth thy while.

Croquis, a man otherwise of rather satirical turn, surprises us, on this occasion, with a fit of enthusiasm. He declares often, that here is the finest of all living heads; speaks much of blended passion and repose; serene depths of eyes; the brow, the temples, royally arched, a very palace of thought;—and so forth.

The writer of these Notices is not without decision of character, and can believe what he knows. He answers Brother Croquis, that it is no wonder the head should be royal and a palace; for a most royal work was appointed to be done therein. Reader! within that head the whole world lies mirrored, in such clear ethereal harmony as it has done in none since Shakspeare left us: even *this* rag-fair of a world, wherein thou painfully strugglest, and (as is like) stumblest,—all lies transfigured here, and revealed authentically to be still holy, still divine. What alchymy was that: to find a mad universe full of scepticism, discord, desperation; and *transmute* it into a wise universe of belief, and melody, and reverence! Was not *there* an *opus magnum*, if one ever was? This, then, is he who, heroically doing and enduring, has accomplished it.

In this distracted Time of ours, wherein men have lost their old loadstars, and wandered after night-fires and foolish will-o'-wisps; and all things, in that 'shaking of the nations,' have been tumbled into chaos, the high made low and the low high; and ever and anon

some duke of this, and king of that, is gurgled aloft, to float there for moments; and fancies himself the governor and head-director of it all, and *is* but the topmost froth-bell, to burst again and mingle with the wild fermenting mass: in this so despicable Time, we say, there were nevertheless (be the bounteous heavens ever thanked for it!) *two great men* sent among us. The one, in the island of St. Helena now sleeps 'dark and lone, amid the ocean's everlasting lullaby;' the other still rejoices in the blessed sunlight, on the banks of the Ilme.

Great was the part alloted each, great the talent given him for the same; yet, mark the contrast! Bonaparte walked through the war-convulsed world like an all-devouring earthquake, heaving, thundering, hurling kingdom over kingdom; Goethe was as the mild-shining, inaudible Light, which, notwithstanding, can again make that Chaos into a creation. Thus, too, we see Napoleon, with his Austerlitzes, Waterloos, and Borodinos, is quite gone; all departed, sunk to silence like a tavern-brawl. While this other!—*he* still shines with his direct radiance; his inspired words are to abide in living hearts, as the life and inspiration of thinkers, born and still unborn. Some fifty years hence, his thinking will be found translated, and ground down, even to the capacity of the diurnal press; acts of parliament will be passed in virtue of him:—this man, if we will consider of it, is appointed to be ruler of the world.

Reader! to thee thyself, even now, he has one counsel to give, the secret of his whole poetic alchymy: GEDENKE ZU LEBEN. Yes, 'think of living!' Thy

life, wert thou the 'pitifullest of all the sons of earth,' is no idle dream, but a solemn reality. It is thy own; it is all thou hast to front eternity with. Work, then, even as he has done, and does,—'LIKE A STAR, UNHASTING, YET UNRESTING.'—*Sic valeas.*

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

I.

FROM "GERMAN ROMANCE."*

LUDWIG TIECK.

LUDWIG TIECK, born at Berlin, on the 31st of May, 1773, is known to the world only as a Man of Letters, having never held any public station, or followed any profession, except that of authorship. Of his private history the critics and news-hunters of his own country complain that they have little information; a deficiency which may arise in part from the circumstance, that till of late years, though from the first admired by the Patricians of his native literature, he has stood in no high favour, and of course awakened no great curiosity, among the reading *Plebs;* and may indicate, at the same time, that in his walk and conversation, there is little wonderful to be discovered.

His literary life he began at Berlin, in his twenty-second year, by the publication of three Novels, following each other in quick succession: *Abdallah, William Lovell,* and *Peter Leberrecht.* These works found small patronage at their first appearance, and are still regarded as immature products of his genius; the opening of a cloudy, as well as

* GERMAN ROMANCE: SPECIMENS OF ITS CHIEF AUTHORS; WITH BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTICES: IN FOUR VOLUMES. VOLUME II CONTAINING *Tieck and Hoffmann.* (Edinburgh, 1827.)

fervid dawn; betokening a day of strong heat, and perhaps at last, of serene brightness. A gloomy tragic spirit is said to reign throughout all of them; the image of a high passionate mind, scorning the base and the false, rather than accomplishing the good and the true; in rapt earnestness 'interrogating Fate,' and receiving no answer, but the echo of its own questions reverberated from the dead walls of its vast and lone imprisonment.

In this stage of spiritual progress, where so many not otherwise ungifted minds at length painfully content themselves to take up their permanent abode, where our own noble and hapless Byron perished from among us at the instant when his deliverance seemed at hand, it was not Tieck's ill fortune to continue too long. His *Popular Tales*, published in 1797, as an appendage to his last Novel, under the title of *Peter Leberrechts Volksmährchen*, already indicate that he had worked his way through these baleful shades into a calmer and sunnier elevation; from which, and happily without looking at the world through a painted glass of any sort, he had begun to see that there were things to be believed, as well as things to be denied; things to be loved and forwarded, as well as things to be hated and trodden under foot. The active and positive of Goodness was displacing the barren and tormenting negative; and worthy feelings were now to be translated into their only proper language, worthy actions. In Tieck's mind, all Goodness, all that was noble or excellent in Nature, seems to have combined itself under the image of Poetic Beauty; to the service and defence of which he has ever since unweariedly devoted his gifts and his days.

These *Volksmährchen* are of the most varied nature: sombre, pathetic, fantastic, satirical; but all pervaded by a warm, genial soul, which accommodates itself with equal aptitude to the gravest or the gayest form. A soft abund-

ance, a simple and kindly but often solemn majesty is in them: wondrous shapes, full of meaning, move over the scene, true modern denizens of the old Fairyland; low tones of plaintiveness or awe flit round us; or a starry splendour twinkles down from the immeasurable depths of Night.

It is by this work, as revised and perfected long afterwards, that we now purpose introducing Tieck to the notice of the English reader: it was by this also that he was introduced to the notice of his countrymen. *Peter Leberrechts Volksmährchen* was reviewed by August Wilhelm Schlegel, in the Jena *Litteraturzeitung;* and its author, for the first time, brought under the eye of the world as a man of rich endowments, and in the fair way for turning them to proper account. To the body of the world, however, this piece of news was surprising rather than delightful; for Tieck's merits were not of a kind to split the ears of the groundlings, and his manner of producing them was ill calculated to conciliate a kind hearing. Schiller and Goethe were at this time silent, or occupied with History and Philosophy: Tieck belonged not to the existing poetic guild; and, far from soliciting admission, he had not scrupled, in the most pleasant fashion, to inform the craftsmen that their great Diana was a dumb idol, and their silver shrines an unprofitable thing. Among these *Volksmährchen,* one of the most prominent is *Der gestiefelte Kater,* a dramatised version of *Puss in Boots;* under the grotesque mask of which, he had laughed with his whole heart, in a true Aristophanic vein, at the actual aspect of literature; and without mingling his satire with personalities, or any other false ingredient, had rained it like a quiet shower of volcanic ashes on the cant of Illumination, the cant of Sensibility, the cant of Criticism, and the many other cants of that shallow time, till the gum-flower products of the poetic garden hung draggled and

black under their unkindly coating. In another country, at another day, the drama of *Puss in Boots* may justly be supposed to appear with enfeebled influences; yet even to a stranger there is not wanting a feast of broad joyous humour in this strange phantasmagoria, where pit and stage, and man and animal, and earth and air, are jumbled in confusion worse confounded, and the copious, kind, ruddy light of true mirth overshines and warms the whole.

This What-d'ye-call-it of *Puss in Boots* was, as it were, the key-note which for several years determined the tone of Tieck's literary enterprises. The same spirit lives in his *Verkehrte Welt* (World turned Topsy-turvy), a drama of similar structure, which accompanied the former; in his tale of *Zerbino, or the Tour in search of Taste*, which soon followed it; and in numerous parodies and lighter pieces which he gave to the world in his *Poetic Journal;* the second and last volume of which periodical contains his *Letters on Shakspeare*, inculcating the same doctrines, in a graver shape. About this time, after a short residence in Hamburg, where he had married, he removed his abode to Jena; a change which confirmed him in his literary tendencies, and facilitated the attainment of their objects. It was here that he became acquainted with the two Schlegels; and, at the same time, with their friend Novalis, a young man of a pure, warm, and benignant genius, whose fine spirit died in its first blossoming, and whose posthumous works it was, ere long, the melancholy task of Tieck, and the younger Schlegel, to publish under their superintendence. With Wackenroder of Berlin, a person of kindred mind with Novalis, and kindred fortune also, having died very early, Tieck was already acquainted and united; for he had co-operated in the *Herzensergiessungen eines einsamen Klosterbruders*, an elegant and impressive work on pictorial art, and Wackenroder's chief performance.

These young men sympathised completely in their critical ideas with Tieck; and each was labouring in his own sphere to disseminate them, and reduce them to practice. Their endeavours, it would seem, have prospered; for in colloquial literary history, this gifted cinquefoil, often it is only the trefoil of Tieck and the two Schlegels, have the credit, which was long the blame, of founding a New School of Poetry, by which the Old School, first fired upon in the *Gestiefelte Kater*, and ever afterwards assailed, without intermission, by eloquence and ridicule, argument and entreaty, was at length displaced and hunted out of being; or, like Partridge the Astrologer, reduced to a life which could be proved to be no life.

Of this New School, which has been the subject of much unwise talk, and of much not very wise writing, we cannot here attempt to offer any suitable description, far less any just estimate. One thing may be remarked, that the epithet *School* seems to describe the case with little propriety. That since the beginning of the present century, a great change has taken place in German literature, is plain enough, without commentators; but that it was effected by three young men, living in the little town of Jena, is not by any means so plain. The critical principles of Tieck and the Schlegels had already been set forth, in the form both of precept and prohibition, and with all the aids of philosophic depth and epigrammatic emphasis, by the united minds of Goethe and Schiller, in the *Horen* and *Xenien*. The development and practical application of the doctrine is all that pertains to these reputed founders of the sect. But neither can the change be said to have originated with Schiller and Goethe; for it is a change originating not in individuals, but in universal circumstances, and belongs not to Germany, but to Europe. Among ourselves, for instance, within the last thirty years, who has not lifted up his voice with double vigour in praise

of Shakspeare and Nature, and vituperation of French taste and French philosophy? Who has not heard of the glories of old English literature; the wealth of Queen Elizabeth's age; the penury of Queen Anne's; and the inquiry whether Pope was a poet? A similar temper is breaking out in France itself, hermetically sealed as that country seemed to be against all foreign influences; and doubts are beginning to be entertained, and even expressed, about Corneille and the Three Unities. It seems to be substantially the same thing which has occurred in Germany, and been attributed to Tieck and his associates: only, that the revolution, which is here proceeding, and in France commencing, appears in Germany to be completed. Its results have there been embodied in elaborate laws, and profound systems have been promulgated and accepted; whereas with us, in past years, there has been as it were a Literary Anarchy; for the Pandects of Blair and Bossu are obsolete or abrogated, but no new code supplies their place; and, author and critic, each sings or says that which is right in his own eyes. For the principles of German Poetics, we can only refer the reader to the treatises of Kant, Schiller, Richter, the Schlegels, and their many copyists and expositors; with the promise that his labour will be hard, but not unrewarded by a plenteous harvest of results, which, whether they be doubted, denied, or believed, he will find no trivial or unprofitable subject for his contemplation.

These doctrines of taste, which Tieck embraced every opportunity of enforcing as a critic, he did not fail diligently to exemplify in practice; as a long and rapid series of poetical performances lies before the world to attest. Of these, his *Genoveva*, a Play grounded on the legend of that Saint, appears to be regarded as his masterpiece by the best judges; though *Franz Sternebalds Wanderungen*, the fictitious History of a Student of Painting, was more

relished by others; and, as a critic tells us, 'here and 'there a low voice might be even heard voting that this 'novel equalled *Wilhelm Meister;* the peaceful clearness of 'which it however nowise attained, but only, with visible 'effort, strove to imitate.' In this last work he was assisted by Wackenroder. At an earlier period, he had come forth, as a translator, with a new version of *Don Quixote:* he now appeared also as a commentator, with a work entitled *Minnelieder aus dem Schwabischen Zeitalter* (Minstrelsy of the Swabian Era), published at Berlin in 1803; with an able Preface, explaining the relation of these poets to Petrarca and the Troubadours. In 1804, he sent out his *Kaiser Octavianus,* a Story which, like the other works mentioned in this paragraph, I have never seen, but which I find praised by his countrymen in no very intelligible terms, as 'a fair revival of the old *Mährchen* (Traditionary 'Tale); in which, however, the poet moves freely, and has 'completed the cycle of the romance.' *Die Gemälde* (The Pictures), another of his fictions, has lately been translated into English.

Tieck's frequent change of place bespeaks less settledness in his domestic, than happily existed in his intellectual circumstances. From Jena he seems to have again removed to Berlin; then to a country residence near Frankfort on the Oder; which, in its turn, he quitted for a journey into Italy. In this classic country he found new facilities for two of his favourite pursuits: He employed himself, it is said, to good purpose, in the study of ancient and modern Art; to which, while in Rome, he added the examining of many old German manuscripts preserved in the Vatican Library. From his labours in this latter department, and elsewhere, his countrymen have not long ago obtained, in addition to the *Minstrelsy,* an *Altdeutsches Theater* (Old-German Theatre), in two volumes, with the

hope of more. A collection of Old-German Poetry is still expected.

In 1806, he returned to Germany; first to Munich, then to his former retreat near Frankfort; but, for the next seven years, he was little heard of as an active member of the literary world; and the regret of his admirers was increased by intelligence that ill health was the cause of his inactivity. That this inactivity was more apparent than real, he has proved by his reappearance in new vigour, at a time when he finds a readier welcome and more willing audience. He has since published abundantly in various forms; as a translator, an editor, and a writer both of poetry and prose. In 1812, appeared his early *Volksmährchen*, retouched, and improved, and combined into a whole, by conversations, critical, disquisitionary and descriptive, in two volumes, entitled *Phantasus;* from which our present specimens of him are taken. His *Altdeutsches Theater* was followed by an *Altenglisches*, including the disputed plays of Shakspeare; a work gladly received by his countrymen, no less devoted admirers of Shakspeare than ourselves. Since that time, he has paid us a personal visit. In 1818, he was in London, and is said to have been well satisfied with his reception; which we cannot but hope was as respectful and kind as a guest so accomplished, and so friendly to England, deserved at our hands. The fruit of his residence among us, it seems, has already appeared in his writings. He has very lately given to the world a Novel on Shakspeare and his Times; in which he has not trembled to introduce, as acting characters, the great dramatist himself, with Marlowe, and various other poets of that age. Such is the report; which adds, that his work is admired in Germany; but that any copy of it has crossed the Channel, I have not heard. Of Tieck's present residence, or special pursuits, or economical

circumstances, I am sorry to confess my entire ignorance. One little fact may perhaps be worth adding; that Sophie Bernhardi, an esteemed authoress, is his sister.

A very slight power of observation will suffice to convince us that Tieck is no ordinary man; but a true Poet, a Poet *born* as well as *made*. Of a nature at once susceptible and strong, he has looked over the circle of human interests with a far-sighted and piercing eye, and partaken deeply of its joy and wo; and these impressions on his heart or his mind have been like seed sown on fertile ground, ripening under the skyey influences into rich and varied luxuriance. He is no mere observer and compiler; rendering back to us, with additions or subtractions, the Beauty which existing things have of themselves presented to him; but a true Maker, to whom the actual and external is but the *excitement* for ideal creations, representing and ennobling its effects. His feeling or knowledge, his love or scorn, his gay humour or solemn earnestness, all the riches of his inward world, are pervaded and mastered by the living energy of the soul which possesses them; and their finer essence is wafted to us in his poetry, like Arabian odours on the wings of the wind.

But this may be said of all true poets; and each is distinguished from all by his individual characteristics. Among Tieck's, one of the most remarkable is his combination of so many gifts in such full and simple harmony. His ridicule does not obstruct his adoration; his gay Southern fancy lives in union with a Northern heart. With the moods of a longing and impassioned spirit he seems deeply conversant; and a still imagination, in the highest sense of that word, reigns over all his poetic world. Perhaps, on the whole, this is his distinguishing faculty; an imagination, not of the intellect, but of the character, not so much vague and gigantic as altogether void and boundless. A feeling as of desert vastness steals over us

in what appeared to be a common scene; or in high passages, a fire as of a furnace glows in one small spot, under the infinitude of darkness: Immensity and Eternity seem to rest over the bounded and quickly-fading.

His mind we should call well cultivated; for no part of it seems stunted in its growth, and it acts in soft unimpeded union. His heart seems, chastened in the school of experience; fervid, yet meek and humble, heedful of good in mean forms, and looking for its satisfaction not in passive, but in active enjoyments. His poetical taste seems no less polished and pure: with all his mental riches and excursiveness, he merits in the highest degree the praise of chaste simplicity, both in conception and style. No man ever rejected more carefully the aid of exaggeration in word and thought, or produced more result by humbler means. Who could have supposed that a tragedy, no mock-heroic, but a real tragedy, calculated to affect and excite us, could have been erected on the groundwork of a nursery tale? Yet let any one read *Blaubart* in the *Phantasus*, and say whether this is not accomplished. Nor is Tieck's history of our old friend *Bluebeard* any Fairyland *George Barnwell;* but a genuine play, with comic as well as tragic life in it; 'a group of earnest figures, painted on a laughing ground,' and surprising us with poetical delight, where we looked for anything sooner.

In his literary life, Tieck has essayed many provinces, both of the imaginative and the intellectual world; but his own peculiar province seems to be that of the *Mährchen;* a word which, for want of a proper synonym, we are forced to translate by the imperfect periphrase of Popular Traditionary Tale. Here, by the consent of all his critics, including even the collectors of real *Mährchen*, he reigns without any rival. The true tone of that ancient time, when man was in his childhood, when the universe

within was divided by no wall of adamant from the universe without, and the forms of the Spirit mingled and dwelt in trustful sisterhood with the forms of the Sense, was not easy to seize and adapt with any fitness of application to the feelings of modern minds. It was to penetrate into the inmost shrines of Imagination, where human passion and action are reflected in dim and fitful, but deeply significant resemblances, and to copy these with the guileless humble graces which alone can become them. Such tales ought to be poetical, because they spring from the very fountains of natural feeling; they ought to be moral, not as exemplifying some current apophthegm, but as imaging forth in shadowy emblems the universal tendencies and destinies of man. That Tieck has succeeded thus far in his Tales is not asserted by his warmest admirers; but only that he now and then approaches such success, and throughout approaches it more closely than any of his rivals.

How far this judgment of Tieck's admirers is correct, our readers are now to try for themselves.* Respecting the reception of these Tales, I cannot boast of having any very certain, still less any very flattering presentiment. Their merits, such as they have, are not of a kind to force themselves on the reader; and to search for merits few readers are inclined. The ordinary lovers of witch and fairy matter will remark a deficiency of spectres and enchantments here, and complain that the whole is rather dull. Cultivated freethinkers again, well knowing that no ghosts or elves exist in this country, will smile at the crackbrained dreamer, with his spelling-book prose and

* The Tales translated from Tieck are: 1. *The Fairhaired Eckbert;* 2. *The Trusty Eckart;* 3. *The Runenberg;* 4. *The Elves;* 5. *The Goblet.*

doggrel verse, and dismiss him good-naturedly as a German Lake-poet. Alas! alas! Ludwig Tieck could also fantasy, 'like a drunk Irishman,' with great convenience, if it seemed good to him; he can laugh too, and disbelieve, and set springes to catch woodcocks in manifold wise: but his present business was not this: nor, I fear, is the lover of witch-matter, or the cultivated free-thinker, likely soon to discover what it was.

Other readers there are, however, who will come to him in a truer and meeker spirit, and, if I mistake not, be rewarded with some touches of genuine poetry. For the credit of the stranger, I ought to remind them that he appears under many disadvantages. In the process of translation he has necessarily lost, and perhaps in more than the usual proportion: the childlike character of his style was apt to diverge into the childish; the nakedness of his rhymes, perhaps at first only wavering between simplicity and silliness, must in my hands too frequently have shifted nearer the latter. Above all, such works as his come on us unprepared; unprovided with any model* by which to estimate them, or any category under which to arrange them. Nevertheless, the present specimens of Tieck do exhibit some features of his mind; a few, but those, as it seems to me, its rarest and highest features: to such readers, and with such allowances, the *Runenberg*, the *Trusty Eckart* and their associates, may be commended with some confidence.

---

* I have not forgotten Allan Cunningham's *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry*; a work full of kind fancy and soft glowing exuberance, and with traces of a genius which might rise into a far loftier and purer element than it has ever yet moved and lived in.

E. T. W. HOFFMANN.

HOFFMANN'S *Life and Remains* have been published, shortly after his decease, and with an amplitude of detail corresponding rather to the popularity, than to the intrinsic merit, of the subject; for Hoffmann belongs to that too numerous class of vivid and gifted literary men, whose genius, never cultured or elaborated into purity, finds loud and sudden, rather than judicious or permanent admiration; and whose history, full of error and perplexed vicissitude, excites sympathising regret in a few, and unwise wonder in many. From this Work, which is honestly and modestly enough written, and has, to all appearance, been extensively read and approved of, I borrow most of the following particulars.

Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann was born at Königsberg, in Prussia, on the 24th of January 1776. His father occupied a post of some dignity in the administration of Justice; the mother's relatives were also engaged in the profession of Law; most of them respectably, some of them with considerable influence and reputation. The elder Hoffmann is said to have been a man of talent; but his temper and habitudes were irregular; his wife was sickly, sensitive, and perhaps querulous and uncompliant: in our Ernst their second child's third year, the parents discovered that they could not live together; and, apparently by mutual consent, dissolved their ill-assorted union. The father withdrew from Königsberg, to prosecute his legal and judicial engagements elsewhere; and seems to have troubled himself no farther about his offspring or old connexions: he died, several years after, at Insterburg, where he had been stationed as a Judge in the Criminal Court of the Oberland. The other parent retired with

young Ernst to her mother's house, also in Königsberg; and there, in painful inaction, wore out seventeen sick and pitiable years, before death put a period to her sufferings. Prior to the separation, the elder child, also a boy, had gone astray into wicked courses, and at last set forth as an infant prodigal into the wide world. The two brothers never met, though the elder is said to be still in life.

Cut off from his natural guardians and directors, young Hoffmann seems to have received no adequate compensation for the want of them, and his early culture was but ill conducted. The grandmother, like her daughter, was perpetually sick, neither of the two almost ever stirring from their rooms. An uncle, retired with the barren title of Justizrath from an abortive practice of Law, took charge of the boy's education: but little Otto had no insight into the endowments or perversities of his nephew, and spent much fruitless effort in endeavouring to train the frolicsome urchin to a clockwork life like his own; for Otto lived by square and rule; his history was a rigid, strenuous, methodical procedure; of which, indeed, except the process of digestion, faithfully enough performed, the result, in Otto's case, was nothing. An unmarried aunt, the only other member of the family, the only member of it gifted with any share of sense, appears to have had a truer view of young Hoffmann; but she loved the little rogue too well; and her tenderness, though repaid by equal and continued tenderness on his part, perhaps hurt him more than the leaden constraint of his uncle. For the rest, the boy did not let the yoke lie too heavy on his shoulders: Otto, it is true, was his teacher, his chamber-mate and bedmate; but every Thursday, the little Justizrath went out to pay visits, and the pupil could then celebrate a day of bedlam jubilee: in a little while, too, by superiority of natural cunning, he had sounded the Justizrath; and from his twelfth year, we are told, he scarcely ever

spoke a word with him, except for purposes of mystification. In this prim circle, he grew up in almost complete isolation; for, by reason of its fantastic strictness, the household was visited by few; and except one boy, a nephew of the Author Hippel's, with whom he accidentally became acquainted, Hoffmann had no companion but his foolish uncle and his too fond aunt. With young Hippel his intimacy more and more increased; and it is pleasant to record of both, that this early connexion continued unbroken, often warm and helpful, through many changes of fortune; Hoffmann's school-friend stood by his death-bed, and took his farewell of him with true heartfelt tears.

For classical instruction, he was early sent to the public school of Königsberg; but till his thirteenth or fourteenth year, he acquired no taste for these pursuits; and remained unnoticed by his teacher, and by all his schoolfellows, except Hippel, rather disrespected and disliked. Music and painting, in which also he had masters, were more to his taste: in a short while, he could fantasy to admiration on the harpsichord; and there was no comic visage in Königsberg which he had not sketched in caricature. His tiny stature (for in youth, as in manhood, he was little, and 'incredibly brisk') giving him an almost infantile appearance, added new wonder to these attainments; and so young Ernst became a musical and pictorial prodigy; to the no small comfort of Justizrath Otto, who delighted to observe that the little imp who had played him so many sorry tricks, and so often overset the steady machinery of his household economy, was turning out not a blackguard, but a genius.

With more prudence and regularity than could have been expected, Hoffmann betook himself, in due time, to preparing for the legal profession; to which, as if by hereditary destiny, he was appointed. In the Königsberg University, indeed, he confessed that Kant's prelections

were a dead letter to him, though it was at that time the fashion both for the wise and simple to be metaphysically transcendental: but he abstained from the riotous practices of his fellow-*bürschen*, and pursued with strict fidelity the tasks by which he hoped ere long to gain an independent livelihood, and be delivered from the thraldom of his grandmother and Justizrath Otto. In this hope he laboured; allowing himself no recreation, except once a-week an evening of literary talk with his fellow-student Hippel, and an occasional glance into *Winkelmann*, or other works on Art, to which, as formerly, the better part of his nature was passionately devoted.

In 1795, he passed his first professional trial, and was admitted Auscultator of the Court of Königsberg; an establishment administrative as well as judicial; in which, however, owing to the pressure of applicants, it was impossible to give him full employment. This leisure, which, with so hot and impatient a spirit, hung heavy enough on his hands, he endeavoured to fill up with subsidiary pursuits: he gave private lessons in music; he painted wild landscapes, or grotesque figures, to which 'a bold alternation of colour and shade' gave a specific character; he talked of men and things, with the most sportful fancy, or the most biting sarcasm: in fine, he wrote two Novels. One of these, at least, he had hoped to see in print; for a bookseller had received it with some expressions of encouragement: but after half a year, his fair manuscript was returned to him all soiled and creased, with an answer, that 'the *anonymity* of the work was likely to hurt its sale.' In the meantime, his situation had become still more perplexed by a private incident in the style of the *Nouvelle Heloise*. One of his fair music-pupils was too lovely and too soft-hearted: no marriage could be thought of between the parties, for she was far above him in rank; and the contradictions and entanglements of this affair so

pained and oppressed him, that he longed with double vehemence to be out of Königsberg. At last, after much wavering and consulting, he snatched himself away, with a resolute, indeed almost heroic effort, from the unpropitious scene; and proceeded, in the summer of 1796, to Great Glogau in Silesia, where another uncle, a brother of Otto's, occupied a post in the Administration, and had promised to procure him employment.

In Great Glogau he did not find the composure which he was in search of; his uncle and his cousins treated him with great affection, and his labour was not irksome or unprofitable; but, in his letters, he complains incessantly of tedium, and other spiritual maladies: and, in 1798, he joyfully took leave of Silesia, following his uncle, who was now promoted to a higher legal post in Berlin. Here too the young jurist continued only for a short time. Having passed his third and last trial, the *examen rigorosum*, and this with no common applause, he was soon afterwards appointed Assessor of the Court at Posen, in South Prussia (Poland); whither he proceeded in March 1800.

With Hoffmann's removal to Poland, begins a new era of his life: he was now director of his own actions, and unhappily he did not direct them well. At Berlin, and even at Great Glogau, he had been accustomed to enliven the routine of legal duty by the study of Art; for which the public collections of pictures, and the numerous professors of music, had in both cities afforded considerable opportunity. In Posen, these resources were abridged; there was little music, little painting; his official associates were dry week-day men, who worked hard at their desks, and lived hard when enfranchised from them; without taste for literature, or art of any kind, except it were the art of cookery and brewing. The Poles also were a lively, jolly people, and much addicted to 'strong Hungary wine.' Hoffmann yielded too far to the custom of the land;

and here, it would seem, contracted habits of irregularity, from which he could never after get delivered. Another refuge against tedium, derived from his own peculiar resources, was even less to be excused. In private hours, he had condescended to become the scandalous chronicle of Posen, and to sketch a series of caricatures, exhibiting, under the most ludicrous yet recognisable aspects, a great number of individuals and transactions; sparing no rank or relation, where he fancied himself to have been provoked, or thought his satire might be expected to tell. On occasion of a masquerade, a gay companion, his future brother-in-law, equipped himself like an Italian hawker; and proceeding to the ball with his pestilent ware in his basket, distributed the pictures, each picture to some ill-wisher of the person whom it represented; and then vanished from the room. For the first half hour, there was a general triumph; which, on comparing notes, passed into a general wail. The author was speedily detected: his talent, the only thing admirable in the transaction, betrayed him, and the punishment followed close on the offence. Intelligence was sent to Berlin; and the patent, lying ready for signature, which should have made him Rath (Councillor) at Posen, was changed for a similar appointment at Plozk; a change which, in all points, he regarded as an exile, but which his best friends could not help admitting that he had richly merited.

From Plozk he failed not to emit his *Tristia;* soliciting, with pressing earnestness, deliverance from his Polish Tomos. What was more to the purpose, he seems to have amended his conduct: he had married while in Posen; his wife, a fair Poless, was possessed of many graces, and of contentment and submissiveness without limit; and the husband was beginning to substitute the duties and enjoyments of domestic and studious life, for the revelry and riot in which of late he had much too deeply mingled.

In his official capacity, his assiduity and perseverance so far gained on his superiors, that at length, by the influence of Hippel and other friends, he was transferred from Plozk to Warsaw; after having spent two regretful, but diligent, and not unprofitable years, in this provincial seclusion. In the summer of 1804, he hastened to his new destination, which his fancy had decked for him in all the colours of hope.

To Hoffmann, the Polish capital was like a vast perpetual masquerade; and for a time he enjoyed its exotic, many-coloured aspect, the more from its contrast with his late way of life. His public duty was not difficult, and he performed it punctually; his salary sufficed him; there were theatres and music on every hand; and the streets were peopled with a motley tumult of the strangest forms: 'gay silken Polesses, talking and promenading over broad 'stately squares; the ancient venerable Polish noble, with 'moustaches, caftan, sash, and red or yellow boots; the new 'race equipped as Parisian *Incroyables;* with foreigners of 'every nation;' not excluding long-bearded Jews, puppet-show-men, monks, and dancing-bears. In a little while, Hoffmann had formed some acquaintances among the human part of the throng; with one Hitzig, his colleague in office, he established a lasting intimacy. It began oddly enough: one day the two were walking home together from the Court, and engaged in laborious, stinted, and formal conversation, when Hoffmann, asking the character of some individual, the other answered, in the words of Falstaff, that he was 'a fellow in buckram;' a phrase which enlightened the caustic visage of Hoffmann, at all times shy to strangers, and at once raised him into one of his brilliant communicative moods. This Hitzig, himself a man of talent and energy, was of great service in assisting Hoffmann's intellectual culture while at Warsaw, and stood by him afterwards in many difficult emergencies.

An enthusiast dilettante prepared a new source of interest to Hoffmann, by a scheme which he proposed of erecting a Musical Institution. By dint of great effort, the dilettante succeeded in procuring subscribers; first one deserted palace, then a larger one, was purchased for a hall of meeting: and Hoffmann, seeing that the scheme was really to take effect, now entered into it with heart and hand. He planned the arrangement of the rooms in the New *Ressource:* for their decorations, he sketched cartoons, part of which were painted by other artists, part he himself painted; not forgetting to introduce caricature portraits of many honest subscribers, whom, by wings and tails, he disguised as sphinxes, gryphons, and other mythological cattle. His time was henceforth divided between his Court and this Musical Ressource: here, perched on his scaffold, among his paint-pots, with the brush in his hand, and a bottle of Hungary by his side, he might, in free hours, be seen diligently working, and talking in the meanwhile to his friends assembled below. If called to any juridical function by any extraordinary mandate from the President, he would doff his painter's-jacket, clamber down from his scaffold, wash his hands, and, to the surprise of parties, transact their business as rapidly and correctly, as if he had known no other employment.

The Musical Ressource prospered beyond expectation: brilliant concerts were given; all that was fairest and gracefullest in Warsaw attending, or even assisting: Hoffmann officiated as leader in their performance; and, especially in Mozart's pieces, was allowed to have done his part with consummate skill. Ere long, however, these melodious festivities were abruptly closed. News came of the battle of Jena; Russian foreposts entered the city; Tartars, Cossacks, Bashkirs increased the chaos of its population. In due time, arrived French envoys to treat of a surrender;

the Prussians mounted guard with their knapsacks on; and one morning tidings spread over the city, that the Praga bridge of boats was on fire, that the Russians and Prussians were retiring on the one side, and Murat's advanced-guard entering by the other. The rest is easy to conceive: the Prussian government was at an end in Warsaw; Hoffmann's *Collegium* honestly divided the contents of their strongbox, then closed the partnership, and dispersed, each whither he listed, to seek safety and new employment.

To most of them this was a grievous stroke: not to Hoffmann. For him, Warsaw was still a fine variegated spectacle; he had money enough for present wants; of the future he took little heed, or thought loosely that he could live by Art, and that Art was far better than Law. Leaving his large house, where his purse seemed hardly safe from military violence, he took refuge in the garret of the Musical Ressource: here was his pianoforte and a library, here his wife and only child; without, were Napoleon and his generals, reviews, *restaurateurs*, theatres, churches with musical monks; and abundance of fellow-loungers to attend him in these amusements. It was not till after a severe attack of fever, and the most visible contraction of his purse, that he seriously bethought him what he was to do. A sad enough outlook! For Art, which had seemed so benignant at a distance, was shy and inaccessible when actually applied to for bread. Hitzig had hastened off to Berlin, and there opened a book-shop, in hope of better times: but his accounts of musical profits in that city were discouraging; and for the journey to Vienna, which he advised and gave letters to forward, Hoffmann had now no funds. His uncle in Berlin was dead; from little Otto nothing could be drawn: the perplexity was thickening, and the means of unravelling it were daily diminishing. For the present, he resolved to

leave his wife and daughter at Posen, with their relations, and to visit Berlin himself in quest of some employment.

In Berlin he could find no employment whatever, either as a portrait-painter, a teacher or a composer of music; meanwhile the last remnant of his cash, his poor six Friedrichs-d'or, were one night filched from his trunk; and news came from Posen, that his little Cecilia was dead, and his wife dangerously ill. In this extremity, his heart for a while had nigh failed him; but he again gathered courage, and made a fresh attempt. He published in the newspapers an advertisement, offering himself as Music-director, on the most moderate terms, in any theatre; and was happy enough, soon afterwards, to make an engagement of the kind he wished, with the managers of the Bamberg stage, at that time under the patronage of the Count von Soden.

To an ordinary temper, this very humble preferment would have offered but a mortifying contrast with former affluence and official respectability: Hoffmann, however, saw in it the means of realising his long-cherished wish, a life devoted to Art; and hastened to his Bamberg musical appointment with gayer hopes than he had ever fixed on any other prospect. Had money or economical comfort been his chief object, he must have felt himself cruelly disappointed: mischance on mischance befell the Bamberg theatre; contradiction on the back of contradiction awaited the new Music-director, whose life, for the next seven years, differs in no outward respect from that of the most unprosperous strolling player. Nevertheless, he made no complaint; perhaps he really felt little sorrow. 'This 'must do,' writes he in his Diary, 'and it will do; for now 'I shall never more have a *Relatio ex Actis* to write while 'I live, and so the Fountain of all Evil is dried up.' In a wealthier station, he might have composed more operas, and painted more caricatures; but it is possible enough

the world might never have heard of him as a writer. The fate of his first two Novels had perhaps disgusted him with authorship: his studies at least had long pointed to other objects; nor was it choice, but necessity, which now led him back to literature. After many stagnations, the Bamberg theatrical cash-box had at length become entirely insolvent; portrait-painting, and music-teaching, were inadequate to the support of even a frugal household: Hoffmann, who, in all his straits, appears to have disdained pecuniary assistance, now wrote to Rochlitz of Leipzig, Editor of the *Musicalische Zeitung* (Musical Chronicle), soliciting employment in this Work; and, by way of testimonial, transmitting some of his recent performances. The letter itself, written with the most fantastic drollery, was testimonial enough: Hoffmann was instantly and gladly accepted; and in ten days, two essays were prepared and despatched; the first of a long series, afterwards collected, enlarged, and given to the world under the title of *Fantasiestücke, in Callot's Manier* (Fantasy-pieces, in the style of Callot*), with a preface by Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, to whom Hoffmann had paid a visit while at Bamberg.

The incipient author was delighted with his new task; and Rochlitz and his readers no less so with its execution. These *Fantasiestücke* turning chiefly on Music, exclusively on Art, were afterwards to make him known to the world as a brilliant and peculiar writer; and they served for the present to augment his scanty funds, to bring him into favour and employment as a musical composer, and at last to deliver him from Bamberg. In 1813, by the management of Rochlitz, he formed an engagement at Dresden,

* Some of my readers may require to be informed that Jacques Callot was a Lorraine painter of the seventeenth century; a wild genius, whose *Temptation of St. Antony* is said to exceed, in chaotic incoherence, that of Teniers himself.

again as Music-director, in the theatre of one Seconda. This appointment he hailed as a most propitious change; but his theatrical career was not destined anywhere to be smooth. Misfortunes, almost destruction, overtook him even on his journey: Seconda he soon found to be a driveller; the opera shifted from Dresden to Leipzig, and from Leipzig to Dresden; the country was full of Cossacks and *Gendarmes*, and Hoffmann's operatic melodies were drowned in the loud clang of Napoleon's battles. Till the end of 1814, he led a life more chequered by hard vicissitudes than ever: now quarrelling with Seconda, now sketching caricatures of the French; now writing *Fantasies*, now looking at Battles; sometimes sick, often in danger, generally light of heart, and always short of money. The *Golden Pot*, one of the *Fantasiestücke*, which follows this Introduction, was begun in Dresden, shortly before the Battle of Leipzig, while the cannon of the Allies was bombarding the city; with grenadoes bursting at the writer's very hand, nay at last driving him from his garret into some safer shelter.

The revolution of Europe, which restored so many sovereigns to their thrones, restored Hoffmann to his chair of office. He arrived at Berlin in September 1814; was provided with employment; reinstated in his former rights of seniority; and two years afterwards, promoted, in consequence, to be Rath in the *Kammergericht*, or Exchequer Court of the capital.

Hoffmann's situation, after all his buffetings, might now be considered enviable: the income of his post was amply sufficient, and its labour not excessive; his best friends were in his neighbourhood, Hitzig was working with him at the same table; his public conduct was irreprehensible, and his literary fame was rapidly spreading. The *Fantasiestücke* were already universally popular; the *Elixiere des Teufels* (Devil's Elixir, a Novel in two vo-

lumes, since translated into English) had just been given to the circulating libraries; and his Opera of *Undine*, which Fouqué had versified for Hoffmann's music, was brought out on the Berlin stage with loud plaudits, and reviewed with praises by Weber himself. Hoffmann was happy; and had he been wise, might still have continued happy: but he was not wise, and in this cup of joy there lurked for him a deadly poison.

Berlin, like most other cities, prides itself in being somewhat of a modern Athens; and Hoffmann, the wonder of the day, was invited with the warmest blandishments to participate in its musical and literary *tea*. But in these polished circles Hoffmann prospered ill: he was sharp-tempered; vain, indeed, but transcendently vain; he required the wittiest talk or the most entire audience; and had a heart-hatred to inanity, however gentle and refined. When his company grew tiresome, he 'made the most terrific faces;' would answer the languishing raptures of some perfumed critic by an observation on the weather; would transfix half a dozen harmless dilettanti through the vitals, each on his several bolt; nay, in the end, give vent to his spleen by talking like a sheer maniac; in short, never cease till, one way or other, the hapless circle was reduced to utter desolation. To this intellectual beverage he was seldom twice invited; and, ere long, the musical and literary Tea-urn was for him a closed fountain.

Yet Hoffmann could not do without society, without excitement, and now not well without exclusive admiration. His old friends he had not forsaken, for he seldom, and with difficulty, got intimate with a stranger; but their quiet life could not content him: it was clear that the enjoyment he sought was only to be found among gay laughter-loving topers, as a guest at their table, or still better, as their sovereign in the wine-house. 'The order

'of his life, from 1816, downwards,' says his Biographer, 'was this: On Mondays and Thursdays he passed his 'forenoons at his post in the Kammergericht; on other days 'at home, in working; the afternoons he regularly spent in 'sleep, to which, in summer, perhaps he added walking: 'the evenings and nights were devoted to the tavern. 'Even when out in company, while the other guests went 'home, he retired to the tavern to await the morning, be-'fore which time it was next to impossible to bring him 'home.' Strangers who came to Berlin went to see him in the tavern; the tavern was his study, and his pulpit, and his throne: here his wit flashed and flamed like an *Aurora Borealis*, and the table was for ever in a roar; and thus, amid tobacco-smoke, and over coarse earthly liquor, was Hoffmann wasting faculties which might have seasoned the nectar of the gods.

Poor Hoffmann was on the highway to ruin; and the only wonder is, that with such fatal speed, he did not reach the goal even more balefully and sooner. His official duties were, to the last, punctually and irreproachably performed. He wrote more abundantly than ever; no Magazine Editor was contented without his contributions; the *Nachtstücke* (Night-pieces) were published in 1817; two years afterwards, *Klein Zaches*, regarded (it would seem falsely) as a local satire; and at last, between 1819 and 1821, appeared in four successive volumes, the *Serapionsbrüder*, containing most of his smaller Tales, collected from various fugitive publications, and combined together by dialogues of the *Serapion-brethren*, a little club of friends, which for some time met weekly in Hoffmann's house. The *Prinzessin Brambilla* (1821) is properly another *Fantasy-piece:* The *Lebensaussichten des Kater Murr* (Tom-cat Murr's Philosophy of Life), published in 1820 and 1821, was meant by the author as his master-work; but the third volume is wanting; and the

wild anarchy, musical and moral, said to reign in the first two, may forever remain unreconciled.

Meanwhile, Hoffmann's tavern orgies continued unabated, and his health at last sank under them. In 1819, he had suffered a renewed attack of gout; from which, however, he had recovered by a journey to the Silesian baths. On his forty-fifth birthday, the 24th of January 1822, he saw his best and oldest friends, including Hitzig and Hippel, assembled round his table; but he himself was sick; no longer hurrying to and fro in hospitable assiduity, as was his custom, but confined to his chair, and drinking bath water, while his guests were enjoying wine. It was his death that lay upon him, and a mournful lingering death. The disease was a *Tabes dorsalis;* limb by limb, from his feet upwards, for five months, his body stiffened and died. Hoffmann bore his sufferings with inconceivable gayety; so long as his hands had power, he kept writing; afterwards, he dictated to an amanuensis; and four of his Tales, the last, *Der Feind* (The Enemy), discontinued only some few days before his death, were composed in this melancholy season. He would not believe that he was dying, and he longed for life with inexpressible desire. On the evening of the 24th of June, his whole body to the neck had become stiff and powerless; no longer feeling pain, he said to his Doctor: "I shall soon be through it now." — "Yes," said the Doctor, "you will soon be through it." Next morning he was evidently dying: yet about eleven o'clock he awoke from his stupor; cried that he was well, and would go on with dictating the *Feind* that night; at the same time calling on his wife to read him the passage where he had stopt. She spoke to him in kind dissuasion: he was silent; he motioned to be turned towards the wall; and scarcely had this been done, when the fatal sound was heard in his throat, and in a few minutes Hoffmann was no more.

Hoffmann's was a mind for which proper culture might have done great things: there lay in it the elements of much moral worth, and talents of almost the highest order. Nor was it weakness of Will that so far frustrated these fine endowments; for in many trying emergencies, he proved that decision and perseverance of resolve were by no means denied him. Unhappily, however, he had found no sure principle of action; no Truth adequate to the guidance of such a mind. What in common minds is called Prudence, was not wanting, could this have sufficed; for it is to be observed, that so long as he was poor, so long as the fetters of every-day duty lay round him, Hoffmann was diligent, unblameable, and even praiseworthy; but these wants once supplied, these fetters once cast off, his wayward spirit was without fit direction or restraint, and its fine faculties rioted in wild disorder. In the practical concerns of life, he felt no interest; in religion he seems not to have believed, or even disbelieved; he never talked of it, or would hear it talked of: to politics he was equally hostile, and equally a stranger. Yet the wages of daily labour, the solace of his five senses, and the intercourse of social or gregarious life, were far from completing his ideal of enjoyment: his better soul languished in these barren scenes, and longed for some worthier home. This home, unhappily, he was not destined to find. He sought for it in the Poetry of Art; and the aim of his writings, so far as they have any aim, as they are not mere interjections, expressing the casual moods of his mind, was constantly the celebration and unfolding of this the best and truest doctrine which he had to preach. But here too his common failing seems to have beset him: he loved Art with a deep but scarcely with a pure love; not as the fountain of Beauty, but as the fountain of refined Enjoyment; he demanded from it not heavenly peace, but earthly excitement; as indeed through his whole life, he had never learned the truth that

for human souls a continuance of passive pleasure is inconceivable, has not only been denied us by Nature, but cannot, and could not be granted.

From all this there grew up in Hoffmann's character something playerlike, something false, brawling, and tawdry, which we trace both in his writings and his conduct. His philosophy degenerates into levity, his magnanimity into bombast: the light of his fine mind is not sunshine, but the glitter of an artificial firework. As in Art, so in Life he had failed to discover that 'agreeable sensations' are not the highest good. His pursuit of these led him into many devious courses, and the close of his mistaken pilgrimage was—the tavern.

Yet if, in judging Hoffmann, we are forced to condemn him, let it be with mildness, with justice. Let us not forget, that for a mind like his, the path of propriety was difficult to find, still more difficult to keep. Moody, sensitive, and fantastic, he wandered through the world like a foreign presence, subject to influences of which common natures have happily no glimpse. A whole scale of the most wayward and unearthly humours stands recorded in his Diary: his head was forever swarming with beautiful or horrible chimeras; a common incident could throw his whole being into tumult, a distorted face or figure would abide with him for days, and rule over him like a spell. It was not things, but 'the shows of things,' that he saw; and the world and its business, in which he had to live and move, often hovered before him like a perplexed and spectral vision. Withal it should be remembered, that, though never delivered from Self, he was not cruel or unjust, nor incapable of generous actions and the deepest attachment. His harshness was often misinterpreted; for heat of temper deformed the movements of kindness; mockery also was the dialect in which he spoke and even thought, and often, under a calm or bitter smile, he could

veil the wounds of a bleeding heart. A good or a wise man we must not call him: but to others his presence was beneficent, his injuries were to himself; and among the ordinary population of this world, to note him with the mark of reprobation were ungrateful and unjust.

His genius formed the most important element of his character, and of course participated in its faults. There are the materials of a glorious poet, but no poet has been fashioned out of them. His mind was not cultivated or brought under his own dominion; we admire the rich ingredients of it, and regret that they were never purified, and fused into a whole. His life was disjointed: he had to labour for his bread, and he followed three different arts; what wonder that in none of them he should attain perfection? Accordingly, except perhaps as a musician, the critics of his country deny him the name of an Artist: as a poet, he aimed but at popularity, and has attained little more. His intellect is seldom strong, and that only in glimpses; his abundant humour is too often false and local; his rich and gorgeous fancy is continually distorted into crotchets and caprices. In fact, he elaborated nothing; above all, not himself. His knowledge, except in the sphere of Art, is not extensive; for an author, he had read but little; criticisms, even of his own works, he never looked into; and except Richter, whom he saw only once, he seems never to have met with any individual whose conversation could instruct or direct him. Human nature he had studied only as a caricature-painter: men, it is said, in fact interested him chiefly as mimetic objects; their common doings and destiny were without beauty for him, and he observed and copied them only in their extravagancies and ludicrous distortions. His works were written with incredible speed, and they bear many marks of haste: it is seldom that any piece is perfected, that its brilliant and often genuine elements are blended in harmonious

union. On the largest of his completed Novels, the *Elixiere des Teufels*, he himself set no value; and the *Kater Murr*, which he meant for a higher object, he did not live to finish, nor is it thought he could have finished it. His smaller pieces were mostly written for transitory publications, and too often with only a transitory excellence. We do not read them without interest, without high amusement, but the second reading pleases worse than the first: for there is too little meaning in that bright extravagance; it is but the hurried copy of the phantasms which for ever masqueraded through the author's mind; it less resembles the creation of a poet, than the dream of an opium-eater.

With these faults a rigorous criticism may charge Hoffmann; and this the more strictly, the greater his talent, the more undoubted his capability and obligation to avoid them. At the same time, to reject his claim, as has been done, to what the poets call their immortality, seems hard measure. If Callot and Teniers, his models, still figure in picture-galleries; if Rabelais continues, after centuries, to be read, and even the *Caliph Vatheh*, after decades, still finds admirer, the products of a mind so brilliant, wild, and singular as that of Hoffmann may long hover in the remembrance of the world; as objects of curiosity, of censure, and, on the whole, compared with absolute Nonentity, of entertainment and partial approval. For the present, at least, as a child of his time and his country, he is not to be overlooked in any survey of German Literature, and least of all by the foreign student of it.

Among Hoffmann's shorter performances, I find *Meister Martin* noted by his critics as the most perfect: it is a story of ancient Nürnberg, and worked up in a style which even reminds us of the Author of Waverley. Never-

theless, I have selected this *Goldne Topf*,* as likelier to interest the English reader: it has more of the faults, but also more of the excellencies peculiar to its author, and exhibits a much truer picture of his individuality. To recommend it, criticisms would be unavailing: there is no deep art involved in its composition; to minds alive to the graces of Fancy, and disposed to pardon even its aberrations when splendid and kindly, this *Mährchen* will speak its whole meaning for itself, and to others it has little or nothing to say. The most tolerant will see in it much to pardon; but even under its present disadvantages they may perhaps recognise in it the erratic footsteps of a poet, and lament with me that his course has ended so far short of the goal.

* *Golden Pot*, our only Translation from Hoffmann.

II.

NOVELLE.*

TRANSLATED FROM GOETHE.

[1832.]

THE spacious courts of the Prince's Castle were still veiled in thick mists of an autumnal morning; through which veil, meanwhile, as it melted into clearness, you could more or less discern the whole Hunter-company, on horseback and on foot, all busily astir. The hasty occupations of the nearest were distinguishable: there was lengthening, shortening of stirrup-leathers; there was handing of rifles and shot-pouches, there was putting of game-bags to rights; while the hounds, impatient in their leashes, threatened to drag their keepers off with them. Here and there, too, a horse shewed spirit more than enough; driven on by its fiery nature, or excited by the spur of its rider, who even now in the half-dusk could not repress a certain self-complacent wish to exhibit himself. All waited, however, on the Prince, who, taking leave of his young consort, was now delaying too long.

United a short while ago, they already felt the happiness of consentaneous dispositions; both were of active vivid character; each willingly participated in the tastes and endeavours of the other. The Prince's father had already, in his time, discerned and improved the season when it became evident that all members of the common-

* FRASER'S MAGAZINE, No. 34.

wealth should pass their days in equal industry; should all, in equal working and producing, each in his kind, first earn and then enjoy.

How well this had prospered was visible in these very days, when the chief market was a-holding, which you might well enough have named a fair. The Prince yester-even had led his Princess on horseback through the tumult of the heaped-up wares; and pointed out to her how, on this spot, the Mountain region met the Plain country in profitable barter: he could here, with the objects before him, awaken her attention to the various industry of his Land.

If the Prince at this time occupied himself and his servants almost exclusively with these pressing concerns, and in particular worked incessantly with his Finance-minister, yet would the Huntmaster too have his right; on whose pleading, the temptation could not be resisted to undertake, in this choice autumn weather, a Hunt that had already been postponed; and so for the household itself, and for the many stranger visitants, prepare a peculiar and singular festivity.

The Princess staid behind with reluctance: but it was proposed to push far into the Mountains, and stir up the peaceable inhabitants of the forests there with an unexpected invasion.

At parting, her lord failed not to propose a ride for her, with Friedrich, the Prince-Uncle, as escort: "I will leave thee," said he, "our Honorio too, as Equerry and Page, who will manage all." In pursuance of which words, he, in descending, gave to a handsome young man the needful injunctions; and soon thereafter disappeared with guests and train.

The Princess, who had waved her handkerchief to her husband while still down in the court, now retired to the back apartments, which commanded a free prospect

towards the Mountains; and so much the lovelier, as the Castle itself stood on a sort of elevation, and thus, behind as well as before, afforded manifold magnificent views. She found the fine telescope still in the position where they had left it yester-even, when amusing themselves over bush and hill and forest-summit, with the lofty ruins of the primeval Stammburg, or Family Tower; which in the clearness of evening stood out noteworthy, as at that hour with its great light-and-shade masses, the best aspect of so venerable a memorial of old time was to be had. This morning too, with the approximating glasses, might be beautifully seen the autumnal tinge of the trees, many in kind and number, which had struggled up through the masonry, unhindered and undisturbed during long years. The fair dame, however, directed the tube somewhat lower, to a waste stony flat, over which the Hunting-train was to pass: she waited the moment with patience, and was not disappointed: for with the clearness and magnifying power of the instrument her glancing eyes plainly distinguished the Prince and the Head-Equerry; nay, she forebore not again to wave her handkerchief, as some momentary pause and looking-back was fancied perhaps, rather than observed.

Prince-Uncle, Friedrich by name, now with announcement entered, attended by his Painter, who carried a large portfolio under his arm. "Dear Cousin," said the hale old gentleman, "we here present you with the Views of the Stammburg, taken on various sides to shew how the mighty Pile, warred on and warring, has from old times fronted the year and its weather; how here and there its wall had to yield, here and there rush down into waste ruins. However, we have now done much to make the wild mass accessible; for more there wants not to set every traveller, every visitor, into astonishment, into admiration."

As the Prince now exhibited the separate leaves, he continued: "Here where, advancing up the hollow-way, through the outer ring-walls, you reach the Fortress proper, rises against us a rock, the firmest of the whole mountain; on this there stands a tower built, yet where Nature leaves off, and Art and Handicraft begin, no one can distinguish. Farther you perceive, sidewards, walls abutting on it, and donjons terrace-wise stretching down. But I speak wrong; for, to the eye, it is but a wood that encircles that old summit: these hundred and fifty years no axe has sounded there, and the massiest stems have on all sides sprung up; wherever you press inwards to the walls, the smooth maple, the rough oak, the taper pine, with trunk and roots oppose you; round these we have to wind, and pick our footsteps with skill. Do but look how artfully our Master has brought the character of it on paper; how the roots and stems, the species of each distinguishable, twist themselves among the masonry, and the huge boughs come looping through the holes. It is a wilderness like no other; an accidentally unique locality, where ancient traces of long-vanished power of Man, and the ever-living, ever-working power of Nature shew themselves in the most earnest conflict."

Exhibiting another leaf, he went on: "What say you now to the Castle-court, which, become inaccessible by the falling in of the old gate-tower, had for immemorial time been trodden by no foot? We sought to get at it by a side; have pierced through walls, blasted vaults asunder, and so provided a convenient but secret way. Inside it needed no clearance; here stretches a flat rock-summit, smoothed by Nature: but yet strong trees have, in spots, found luck and opportunity for rooting themselves there; they have softly but decidedly grown up, and now stretch out their boughs into the galleries where the knights once walked to and fro; nay, through the doors and windows

into the vaulted halls; out of which we would not drive them: they have even got the mastery, and may keep it. Sweeping away deep strata of leaves, we have found the notablest place, all smoothed, the like of which were perhaps not to be met with in the world.

"After all this, however, it is still to be remarked, and on the spot itself well worth examining, how on the steps that lead up to the main tower, a maple has struck root and fashioned itself to a stout tree, so that you hardly can with difficulty press by it, to mount the battlements and gaze over the unbounded prospect. Yet here too, you linger pleased in the shade; for that tree is it which, high over the whole, wondrously lifts itself into the air.

"Let us thank the brave Artist, then, who so deservingly in various pictures teaches us the whole, even as if we saw it: he has spent the fairest hours of the day and of the season therein, and for weeks long kept moving about these scenes. Here in this corner has there, for him and the warder we gave him, been a little pleasant dwelling fitted up. You could not think, my Best, what a lovely outlook into the country, into court and walls, he has got there. But now when all is once in outline, so pure, so characteristic, he may finish it down here at his ease. With these pictures we will decorate our garden-hall; and no one shall recreate his eyes over our regular parterres, our groves and shady walks, without wishing himself up there, to follow, in actual sight of the old and of the new, of the stubborn, inflexible, indestructible, and of the fresh, pliant, irresistible, what reflections and comparisons would rise for him."

Honorio entered, with notice that the horses were brought out; then said the Princess, turning to the Uncle: "Let us ride up; and you will shew me in reality what you have here set before me in image. Ever since I came among you, I have heard of this undertaking;

and should now like, of all things, to see with my own eyes what in the narrative seemed impossible, and in the depicting remains improbable."—"Not yet, my Love," answered the Prince: "What you here saw is what it can become and is becoming; for the present, much in the enterprise stands still amid impediments; Art must first be complete, if Nature is not to shame it."—"Then let us ride at least upwards, were it only to the foot: I have the greatest wish to-day to look about me far in the world."—"Altogether as you will," replied the Prince.—"Let us ride through the Town, however," continued the Lady, "over the great marketplace, where stands the innumerable crowd of booths, looking like a little city, like a camp. It is as if the wants and occupations of all the families in the land were turned outwards, assembled in this centre, and brought into the light of day: for the attentive observer can descry whatsoever it is that man performs and needs; you fancy, for the moment, there is no money necessary, that all business could here be managed by barter, and so at bottom it is. Since the Prince, last night, set me on these reflections, it is pleasant to consider how here, where Mountain and Plain meet together, both so clearly speak out what they require and wish. For as the Highlander can fashion the timber of his woods into a hundred shapes, and mould his iron for all manner of uses, so these others from below come to meet him with most manifold wares, in which often you can hardly discover the material or recognise the aim."

"I am aware," answered the Prince, "that my Nephew turns his utmost care to these things; for specially, on the present occasion, this main point comes to be considered, that one receive more than one give out: which to manage is, in the long-run, the sum of all Political Economy, as of the smallest private housekeeping. Pardon me, however, my Best: I never like to ride through markets; at

every step you are hindered and kept back; and then flames up in my imagination the monstrous misery which, as it were, burnt itself into my eyes, when I witnessed one such world of wares go off in fire. I had scarcely got to ———"

"Let us not lose the bright hours," interrupted the Princess, for the worthy man had already more than once afflicted her with the minute description of that mischance: how he, being on a long journey, resting in the best inn, on the marketplace which was just then swarming with a fair, had gone to bed exceedingly fatigued; and in the night-time been, by shrieks, and flames rolling up against his lodging, hideously awakened.

The Princess hastened to mount her favourite horse: and led, not through the backgate upwards, but through the foregate downwards, her reluctant-willing attendant; for who but would gladly have ridden by her side, who but would gladly have followed after her? And so Honorio too had, without regret, staid back from the otherwise so wished-for Hunt, to be exclusively at her service.

As was to be anticipated, they could only ride through the market step by step: but the fair Lovely one enlivened every stoppage by some sprightly remark; "I repeat my lesson of yester-night," said she, "since Necessity is trying our patience." And in truth, the whole mass of men so crowded about the riders, that their progress was slow. The people gazed with joy at the young dame; and, on so many smiling countenances, might be read the pleasure they felt to see that the first woman in the land was also the fairest and gracefullest.

Promiscuously mingled stood, Mountaineers, who had built their still dwellings amid rocks, firs, and spruces; Lowlanders from hills, meadows, and leas; craftsmen of the little towns; and what else had all assembled there. After a quiet glance, the Princess remarked to her attend-

ant, how all these, whencesoever they came, had taken more stuff than necessary for their clothes, more cloth and linen, more ribands for trimming. It is as if the women could not be bushy enough, the men not puffy enough, to please themselves.

"We will leave them that," answered the Uncle: "spend his superfluity on what he will, a man is happy in it; happiest when he therewith decks and dizens himself." The fair dame nodded assent.

So had they, by degrees, got upon a clear space, which led out to the suburbs; when, at the end of many small booths and stands, a larger edifice of boards shewed itself, which was scarcely glanced at till an ear-lacerating bellow sounded forth from it. The feeding-hour of the wild beasts, there exhibited, seemed to have come: the Lion let his forest- and desert-voice be heard in all vigour; the horses shuddered, and all must remark how, in the peaceful ways and workings of the cultivated world, the king of the wilderness so fearfully announced himself. Coming nearer the booth, you could not overlook the variegated colossal pictures representing with violent colours and strong emblems those foreign beasts; to a sight of which the peaceful burgher was to be irresistibly enticed. The grim monstrous tiger was pouncing on a blackamoor, on the point of tearing him in shreds; a lion stood earnest and majestic, as if he saw no prey worthy of him; other wondrous particoloured creatures, beside these mighty ones, deserved less attention.

"As we come back," said the Princess, "we will alight and take a nearer view of these gentry."—"It is strange," observed the Prince, "that man always seeks excitement by Terror. Inside, there, the Tiger lies quite quiet in his cage; and here must he ferociously dart upon a black, that the people may fancy the like is to be seen within: of murder and sudden death, of burning and destruction,

there is not enough; but balladsingers must at every corner keep repeating it. Good man will have himself frightened a little; to feel the better, in secret, how beautiful and laudable it is to draw breath in freedom."

Whatever of apprehensiveness from such bugbear images might have remained, was soon all and wholly effaced, as, issuing through the gate, our party entered on the cheerfullest of scenes. The road led first up the River, as yet but a small current, and bearing only light boats, but which by and by, as renowned world-stream, would carry forth its name and waters, and enliven distant lands. They proceeded next through well-cultivated fruit-gardens and pleasure-grounds, softly ascending; and by degrees you could look about you, in the now disclosed, much-peopled region; till first a thicket, then a little wood admitted our riders, and the gracefullest localities refreshed and limited their view. A meadow-vale leading upwards, shortly before mown for the second time, velvet-like to look upon, and watered by a brook rushing out lively copious at once from the uplands above, received them as with welcome; and so they approached a higher freer station; which, on issuing from the wood, after a stiff ascent, they gained; and could now descry, over new clumps of trees, the old Castle, the goal of their pilgrimage, rising in the distance, as pinnacle of the rock and forest. Backwards, again (for never did one mount hither without turning round), they caught, through accidental openings of the high trees, the Prince's Castle, on the left, lightened by the morning sun; the well-built higher quarter of the Town, softened under light smoke-clouds: and so on, rightwards, the under Town, the River in several bendings, with its meadows and mills; on the farther side, an extensive fertile region.

Having satisfied themselves with the prospect, or rather, as usually happens when we look round from so high a

station, become doubly eager for a wider, less limited view, they rode on, over a broad stony flat, where the mighty Ruin stood fronting them, as a green-crowned summit, a few old trees far down about its foot: they rode along; and so arrived there, just at the steepest, most inaccessible side. Great rocks jutting out from of old, insensible of every change, firm, well-founded, stood clenched together there; and so it towered upwards; what had fallen at intervals lay in huge plates and fragments confusedly heaped, and seemed to forbid the boldest any attempt. But the steep, the precipitous is inviting to youth: to undertake it, to storm and conquer it, is for young limbs an enjoyment. The Princess testified desire for an attempt; Honorio was at her hand; the Prince-Uncle, if easier to satisfy, took it cheerfully, and would shew that he too had strength: the horses were to wait below among the trees; our climbers make for a certain point, where a huge projecting rock affords standing-room, and a prospect, which indeed is already passing over into the bird's-eye kind, yet folds itself together there picturesquely enough.

The sun, almost at its meridian, lent the clearest light; the Prince's Castle, with its compartments, main buildings, wings, domes, and towers, lay clear and stately; the upper Town in its whole extent; into the lower also you could conveniently look, nay, by the telescope distinguish the booths in the marketplace. So furthersome an instrument Honorio would never leave behind: they looked at the River upwards and downwards; on this side, the mountainous, terrace-like, interrupted expanse, on that the upswelling, fruitful land, alternating in level and low hill; places innumerable; for it was long customary to dispute how many of them were here to be seen.

Over the great expanse lay a cheerful stillness, as is common at noon; when, as the Ancients were wont to

say, Pan is asleep, and all Nature holds her breath not to awaken him.

"It is not the first time," said the Princess, "that I, on some such high far-seeing spot, have reflected how Nature, all clear, looks so pure and peaceful, and gives you the impression as if there were nothing contradictory in the world; and yet when you return back into the habitation of man, be it lofty or low, wide or narrow, there is ever somewhat to contend with, to battle with, to smooth and put to rights."

Honorio, who, meanwhile, was looking through the glass at the Town, exclaimed: "See! see! There is fire in the market!" They looked, and could observe some smoke; the flames were smothered in the daylight. "The fire spreads!" cried he, still looking through the glass; the mischief indeed now became noticeable to the good eyes of the Princess; from time to time you observed a red burst of flame, the smoke mounted aloft; and Prince-Uncle said: "Let us return; that is not good; I always feared I should see that misery a second time." They descended, got back to their horses. "Ride," said the Princess to the Uncle, "fast, but not without a groom; leave me, Honorio, we will follow without delay." The Uncle felt the reasonableness, nay necessity of this; and started off down the waste stony slope, at the quickest pace the ground allowed.

As the Princess mounted, Honorio said: "Please your Excellency to ride slow! In the town as in the Castle, the fire-apparatus is in perfect order; the people, in this unexpected accident, will not lose their presence of mind. Here, moreover, we have bad ground, little stones and short grass; quick riding is unsafe; in any case, before we arrive, the fire will be got under." The Princess did not think so; she observed the smoke spreading, she fancied that she saw a flame flash up, that she heard an explosion;

and now in her imagination all the terrific things awoke, which the worthy Uncle's repeated narrative of his experiences in that market-conflagration had too deeply implanted there.

Frightful doubtless had that business been; alarming and impressive enough to leave behind it, painfully through life long, a boding and image of its recurrence,—when, in the night-season, on the great booth-covered market-space, a sudden fire had seized booth after booth, before the sleepers in these light huts could be shaken out of deep dreams: the Prince himself, as a wearied stranger arriving only for rest, started from his sleep, sprang to the window, saw all fearfully illuminated; flame after flame, from the right, from the left, darting through each other, rolls quivering towards him. The houses of the market-place, reddened in the shine, seemed already glowing; threatened every moment to kindle, and burst forth in fire. Below, the element raged without let; planks cracked, laths crackled; the canvass flew abroad, and its dusky fire-peaked tatters whirled themselves round and aloft,—as if bad spirits, in their own element, with perpetual change of shape, were, in capricious dance, devouring one another, and there and yonder, would dart up out from their penal fire. And then, with wild howls, each saved what was at hand: servants and masters laboured to drag forth bales already seized by the flames; to snatch away yet somewhat from the burning shelves, and pack it into the chests, which too they must at last leave a prey to the hastening flame. How many a one could have prayed but for a moment's pause to the loud-advancing fire; as he looked round for the possibility of some device, and was with all his possession already seized! On the one side, there burnt and glowed already what, on the other, still stood in dark night. Obstinate characters, will-strong men, grimly fronted the grim foe; and saved much, with loss of their eyebrows and

hair.—Alas, all this waste confusion now rose anew before the fair spirit of the Princess; the gay morning prospect was all overclouded, and her eyes darkened; wood and meadow had put on a look of strangeness, of danger.

Entering the peaceful vale, heeding little its refreshing coolness, they were but a few steps onwards from the copious fountain of the brook which flowed by them, when the Princess descried, quite down in the thickets, something singular, which she soon recognised for the tiger: springing on, as she a short while ago had seen him painted, he came towards her; and this image, added to the frightful ones she was already busy with, made the strangest impression. "Fly, your Grace!" cried Honorio, "fly!" She turned her horse towards the steep hill they had just descended. The young man, rushing on towards the monster, drew his pistol and fired when he thought himself near enough; but, alas, without effect; the tiger sprang to a side, the horse faltered, the provoked wild beast followed his course, upwards straight after the Princess. She galloped, what her horse could, up the steep stony space; scarcely apprehending that so delicate a creature, unused to such exertion, could not hold out. It overdid itself, driven on by the necessitated Princess; it stumbled on the loose gravel of the steep, and again stumbled; and at last fell, after violent efforts, powerless to the ground. The fair dame, resolute and dexterous, failed not instantly to get upon her feet; the horse too rose, but the tiger was approaching; though not with vehement speed; the uneven ground, the sharp stones seemed to damp his impetuosity; and only Honorio flying after him, riding with checked speed along with him, appeared to stimulate and provoke his force anew. Both runners, at the same instant, reached the spot where the Princess was standing by her horse: the Knight bent himself, fired, and with this second pistol hit the monster

through the head, so that it rushed down; and now, stretched out in full length, first clearly disclosed the might and terror whereof only the bodily hull was left lying. Honorio had sprung from his horse; was already kneeling on the beast, quenching its last movements, and held his drawn hanger in his right hand. The youth was beautiful; he had come dashing on, as, in sports of the lance and the ring, the Princess had often seen him do. Even so in the riding-course would his bullet, as he darted by, hit the Turk's-head on the pole, right under the turban in the brow; even so would he, lightly prancing up, prick his naked sabre into the fallen mass, and lift it from the ground. In all such arts he was dexterous and felicitous; both now stood him in good stead.

"Give him the rest," said the Princess: "I fear he will hurt you with his claws."—"Pardon!" answered the youth: "he is already dead enough; and I would not hurt the skin, which next winter shall shine upon your sledge."—"Sport not," said the Princess: "whatsoever of pious feeling dwells in the depth of the heart unfolds itself in such a moment."—"I too," cried Honorio, "was never more pious than even now; and therefore do I think of what is joyfullest; I look at the tiger's fell only as it can attend you to do you pleasure."—"It would forever remind me," said she, "of this fearful moment."—"Yet is it," replied the youth with glowing cheeks, "a more harmless spoil than when the weapons of slain enemies are carried for show before the victor."—"I shall bethink me, at sight of it, of your boldness and cleverness; and need not add that you may reckon on my thanks and the Prince's favour for your life long. But rise; the beast is clean dead, let us consider what is next: before all things rise!"—"As I am once on my knees," replied the youth, "once in a posture which in other circumstances would have been forbid, let me beg at this

moment to receive assurance of the favour, of the grace which you vouchsafe me. I have already asked so often of your high Consort for leave and promotion to go on my travels. He who has the happiness to sit at your table, whom you honour with the privilege to entertain your company, should have seen the world. Travellers stream in on us from all parts; and when a town, an important spot in any quarter of the world comes in course, the question is sure to be asked of us, Were we ever there? Nobody allows one sense, till one has seen all that: it is as if you had to instruct yourself only for the sake of others."

"Rise!" repeated the Princess: "I were loath to wish or request aught that went against the will of my Husband; however, if I mistake not, the cause why he has restrained you hitherto will soon be at an end. His intention was to see you ripened into a complete self-guided nobleman, to do yourself and him credit in foreign parts, as hitherto at court; and I should think this deed of yours was as good a recommendatory passport as a young man could wish for, to take abroad with him."

That, instead of a youthful joy, a certain mournfulness came over his face, the Princess had not time to observe, nor had he to indulge his emotion; for, in hot haste, up the steep, came a woman, with a boy at her hand, straight to the group so well known to us; and scarcely had Honorio, bethinking him, arisen, when they howling and shrieking cast themselves on the carcass; by which action, as well as by their cleanly, decent, yet particoloured and unusual dress, might be gathered that it was the mistress of this slain creature, and the black-eyed, black-locked boy, holding a flute in his hand, her son; weeping like his mother, less violent, but deeply moved, kneeling beside her.

Now came strong outbreakings of passion from this woman; interrupted indeed, and pulse-wise; a stream of

words, leaping like a stream in gushes from rock to rock. A natural language, short and discontinuous, made itself impressive and pathetic: in vain should we attempt translating it into our dialects; the approximate purport of it we must not omit. "They have murdered thee, poor beast! murdered without need! Thou wert tame, and wouldst fain have lain down at rest and waited our coming; for thy foot-balls were sore, thy claws had no force left. The hot sun to ripen them was wanting. Thou wert the beautifullest of thy kind: who ever saw a kingly tiger so gloriously stretched out in sleep, as thou here liest, dead, never to rise more? When thou awokest in the early dawn of morning, and openedst thy throat, stretching out thy red tongue, thou wert as if smiling on us; and even when bellowing, thou tookest thy food from the hands of a woman, from the fingers of a child. How long have we gone with thee on thy journeys; how long has thy company been useful and fruitful to us! To us, to us of a very truth, meat came from the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. So will it be no more. Wo! wo!"

She had not done lamenting, when over the smoother part of the Castle Mountain, came riders rushing down; soon recognised as the Prince's Hunting-train, himself the foremost. Following their sport, in the backward hills, they had observed the fire-vapours; and fast through dale and ravine, as in fierce chase, taken the shortest path towards this mournful sign. Galloping along the stony vacancy, they stopped and stared at sight of the unexpected group, which in that empty expanse stood out so markworthy. After the first recognition there was silence; some pause of breathing-time; and then what the view itself did not impart, was with brief words explained. So stood the Prince, contemplating the strange unheard-of incident; a circle round him of riders, and followers that had run on foot. What to do was still undetermined;

the Prince intent on ordering, executing; when a man pressed forward into the circle; large of stature, particoloured, wondrously apparelled, like wife and child. And now the family, in union, testified their sorrow and astonishment. The man, however, soon restrained himself; bowed in reverent distance before the Prince, and said: "It is not the time for lamenting; alas, my lord and mighty hunter, the Lion too is loose; hither towards the mountains is he gone: but spare him, have mercy, that he perish not like this good beast."

"The Lion!" said the Prince: "Hast thou the trace of him?"—"Yes, Lord! A peasant down there, who had heedlessly taken shelter on a tree, directed me farther up this way, to the left; but I saw the crowd of men and horses here; anxious for tidings of assistance, I hastened hither."—"So then," commanded the Prince, "draw to the left, Huntsmen; you will load your pieces, go softly to work; if you drive him into the deep woods, it is no matter: but in the end, good man, we shall be obliged to kill your animal: why were you improvident enough to let him loose?"—"The fire broke out," replied he; "we kept quiet and attentive; it spread fast, but at a distance from us; we had water enough for our defence; but a heap of powder blew up, and threw the brands on to us, and over our heads; we were too hasty, and are now ruined people."

The Prince was still busy directing; but for a moment all seemed to pause, as a man was observed hastily springing down from the heights of the old Castle; whom the troop soon recognised for the watchman that had been stationed there to keep the Painter's apartments, while he lodged there and took charge of the workmen. He came running, out of breath, yet in few words soon made known, That the Lion had laid himself down, within the high ring-wall, in the sunshine, at the foot of a large beech, and was

behaving quite quietly. With an air of vexation, however, the man concluded: "Why did I take my rifle to town yesternight, to have it cleaned? he had never risen again, the skin had been mine, and I might all my life have had the credit of the thing."

The Prince, whom his military experiences here also stood in stead, for he had before now been in situations where from various sides inevitable evil seemed to threaten, said hereupon: "What surety do you give me that if we spare your Lion, he will not work destruction among us, among my people?"

"This woman and this child," answered the father hastily, "engage to tame him, to keep him peaceable, till I bring up the cage, and then we can carry him back unharmed and without harming any one."

The boy put his flute to his lips; an instrument of the kind once named soft, or sweet flutes; short-beaked like pipes: he, who understood the art, could bring out of it the gracefullest tones. Meanwhile the Prince had inquired of the watchman how the lion came up. "By the hollow-way," answered he, "which is walled in on both sides, and was formerly the only entrance, and is to be the only one still: two footpaths, which led in elsewhere, we have so blocked up and destroyed that no human being, except by that first narrow passage, can reach the Magic Castle which Prince Friedrich's talent and taste is making of it."

After a little thought, during which the Prince looked round at the boy, who still continued as if softly preluding, he turned to Honorio, and said: "Thou hast done much to-day, complete thy task. Secure that narrow path; keep your rifles in readiness, but do not shoot till the creature can no otherwise be driven back: in any case, kindle a fire, which will frighten him if he make downwards. The man and woman take charge of the rest." Honorio rapidly bestirred himself to execute these orders.

The child continued his tune, which was no tune; a series of notes without law, and perhaps even on that account so heart-touching: the by-standers seemed as if enchanted by the movement of a song-like melody, when the father with dignified enthusiasm begun to speak in this sort:

"God has given the Prince wisdom, and also knowledge to discern that all God's works are wise, each after its kind. Behold the rock, how he stands fast and stirs not, defies the weather and the sunshine; primeval trees adorn his head, and so crowned he looks abroad; neither if a mass rush away, will this continue what it was, but falls broken into many pieces and covers the side of the descent. But there too they will not tarry, capriciously they leap far down, the brook receives them, to the river he bears them. Not resisting, not contradictory, angular; no, smooth and rounded they travel now quicker on their way, arrive, from river to river, finally at the ocean, whither march the giants in hosts, and in the depths whereof dwarfs are busy.

"But who shall exalt the glory of the Lord, whom the stars praise from Eternity to Eternity! Why look ye far into the distance? Consider here the bee: late at the end of harvest she still busily gathers; builds her a house, tight of corner, straight of wall, herself the architect and mason. Behold the ant: she knows her way, and loses it not; she piles her a dwelling of grass-halms, earth-crumbs, and needles of the fir; she piles it aloft and arches it in; but she has laboured in vain, for the horse stamps, and scrapes it all in pieces: lo! he has trodden down her beams, and scattered her planks; impatiently he snorts, and cannot rest; for the Lord has made the horse comrade of the wind and companion of the storm, to carry man whither he wills, and woman whither she desires. But in the Wood of Palms arose he, the Lion; with earnest step traversed

the wildernesses; there rules he over all creatures; his might who shall withstand? Yet man can tame him; and the fiercest of living things has reverence for the image of God, in which too the angels are made, who serve the Lord and his servants. For in the den of Lions Daniel was not afraid; he remained fast and faithful, and the wild bellowing interrupted not his song of praise."

This speech, delivered with expression of a natural enthusiasm, the child accompanied here and there with graceful tones; but now, the father having ended, he, with clear melodious voice and skilful passaging, struck up his warble; whereupon the father took the flute, and gave note in unison, while the child sang:

From the Dens, I, in a deeper,
Prophet's song of praise can hear;
Angel-host he hath for keeper,
Needs the good man there to fear?

Lion, Lioness, agazing,
Mildly pressing round him came;
Yea, that humble, holy praising,
It hath made them tame.

The father continued, accompanying this strophe with his flute; the mother here and there touched in as second voice.

Impressive, however, in a quite peculiar degree, it was, when the child now began to shuffle the lines of the strophe into other arrangement; and thereby if not bring out a new sense, yet heighten the feeling by leading it into self-excitement:

Angel-host around doth hover,
Us in heavenly tones to cheer;
In the Dens our head doth cover,
Needs the poor child there to fear?

For that humble holy praising
Will permit no evil nigh:
Angels hover, keeping, gazing;
Who so safe as I?

Hereupon with emphasis and elevation began all three:

'For th' Eternal rules above us,
Lands and oceans rules his will;
Lions even as lambs shall love us,
And the proudest waves be still.

Whetted sword to scabbard cleaving,
Faith and Hope victorious see:
Strong, who, loving and believing,
Prays, O Lord, to thee.

All were silent, hearing, hearkening; and only when the tones ceased could you remark and distinguish the impression they had made. All was as if appeased; each affected in his way. The Prince, as if he now first saw the misery that a little ago had threatened him, looked down on his spouse, who leaning on him forebore not to draw out the little embroidered handkerchief, and therewith covered her eyes. It was blessedness for her to feel her young bosom relieved from the pressure with which the preceding minutes had loaded it. A perfect silence reigned over the crowd; they seemed to have forgotten the dangers: the conflagration below; and above, the rising up of a dubiously-reposing Lion.

By a sign to bring the horses, the Prince first restored the group to motion; he turned to the woman, and said: "You think then that, once find the Lion, you could, by your singing, by the singing of this child, with help of these flute-tones, appease him, and carry him back to his prison, unhurt and hurting no one?" They answered Yes, assuring and affirming; the castellan was given them as guide. And now the Prince started off in all speed with a

few; the Princess followed slower, with the rest of the train: mother and son, on their side, under conduct of the warder, who had got himself a musket, mounted up the steeper part of the height.

Before the entrance of the hollow-way which opened their access to the Castle, they found the hunters busy heaping up dry brushwood, to have, in any case, a large fire ready for kindling. "There is no need," said the woman: "it will all go well and peaceably, without that."

Farther on, sitting on a wall, his double-barrel resting in his lap, Honorio appeared; at his post, as if ready for every occurrence. However, he seemed hardly to notice our party; he sat as if sunk in deep thoughts, he looked round like one whose mind was not there. The woman addressed him with a prayer not to let the fire be lit; he appeared not to heed her words; she spoke on with vivacity, and cried: "Handsome young man, thou hast killed my tiger, I do not curse thee; spare my lion, good young man, I will bless thee."

Honorio was looking straight out before him, to where the sun on his course began to sink. "Thou lookest to the west," cried the woman; "thou dost well, there is much to do there; hasten, delay not, thou wilt conquer. But first conquer thyself." At this he appeared to give a smile; the woman stept on; could not, however, but look back once more at him: a ruddy sun was irradiating his face; she thought she had never seen a handsomer youth.

"If your child," said the warder now, "with his fluting and singing, can, as you are persuaded, entice and pacify the Lion, we shall soon get mastery of him after, for the creature has lain down quite close to the perforated vaults through which, as the main passage was blocked up with ruins, we had to bore ourselves an entrance into the Castle-Court. If the child entice him into this latter, I can close

the opening with little difficulty; then the boy, if he like, can glide out by one of the little spiral stairs he will find in the corner. We must conceal ourselves; but I shall so take my place that a rifle-ball can, at any moment, help the poor child in case of extremity."

"All these precautions are unnecessary; God and skill, piety and a blessing, must do the work."—"May be," replied the warder; "however, I know my duties. First, I must lead you, by a difficult path, to the top of the wall, right opposite the vaults and opening I have mentioned: the child may then go down, as into the arena of the show, and lead away the animal, if it will follow him." This was done: warder and mother looked down in concealment, as the child descending the screw-stairs, shewed himself in the open space of the Court, and disappeared opposite them in the gloomy opening; but forthwith gave his flute voice, which by and by grew weaker, and at last sank dumb. The pause was bodeful enough; the old hunter, familiar with danger, felt heart-sick at the singular conjuncture; the mother, however, with cheerful face, bending over to listen, shewed not the smallest discomposure.

At last the flute was again heard; the child stept forth from the cavern with glittering satisfied eyes, the Lion after him, but slowly, and as it seemed with difficulty. He shewed here and there desire to lie down; yet the boy led him in a half-circle through the few disleaved many-tinted trees, till at length, in the last rays of the sun, which poured in through a hole in the ruins, he set him down, as if transfigured in the bright red light; and again commenced his pacifying song, the repetition of which we also cannot forbear:

From the Dens, I, in a deeper,
Prophet's song of praise can hear;
Angel-host he hath for keeper,
Needs the good man there to fear?

Lion, Lioness, agazing,
Mildly pressing round him came;
Yea, that humble, holy praising,
It hath made them tame.

Meanwhile the Lion had laid itself down quite close to the child, and lifted its heavy right fore-paw into his bosom; the boy as he sung gracefully stroked it; but was not long in observing that a sharp thorn had stuck itself between the balls. He carefully pulled it out; with a smile, took the parti-coloured silk-handkerchief from his neck, and bound up the frightful paw of the monster; so that his mother for joy bent herself back with outstretched arms; and perhaps, according to custom, would have shouted and clapped applause, had not a hard hand-gripe of the warder reminded her that the danger was not yet over.

Triumphantly the child sang on, having with a few tones preluded:

For th' Eternal rules above us,
Lands and oceans rules his will;
Lions even as lambs shall love us,
And the proudest waves be still.

Whetted sword to scabbard cleaving,
Faith and Hope victorious see:
Strong, who, loving and believing,
Prays, O Lord, to thee.

Were it possible to fancy that in the countenance of so grim a creature, the tyrant of the woods, the despot of the animal kingdom, an expression of friendliness, of thankful contentment could be traced, then here was such traceable; and truly the child, in his illuminated look, had the air as of a mighty triumphant victor; the other figure, indeed, not that of one vanquished, for his strength lay concealed in

him; but yet of one tamed, of one given up to his own peaceful will. The child fluted and sang on, changing the lines according to his way, and adding new:

And so to good children bringeth
Blessed Angel help in need;
Fetters o'er the cruel flingeth,
Worthy act with wings doth speed.

So have tamed, and firmly iron'd
To a poor child's feeble knee,
Him the forest's lordly tyrant,
Pious Thought and Melody.

III.

SCHILLER, GOETHE, AND MADAME DE STAEL.*

[1832.]

In this age, by some called the Locomotive, when men travel with all manner of practical, scientific, and unscientific purposes; to fish Mexican oysters, and convert the heathen; in search of the picturesque, in search of cheap land, good groceries, bibliography, wives, new cookery, and, generally, though without effect, in search of happiness; when even kings, queens, and constitutions, are so often sent on their travels; and what with railways, what with revolutions, absolutely nothing will stay in its place,—the interest that once attached to mere travellers is gone: no Othello could now by such means win the simplest Desdemona. Nevertheless, in Madame de Staël's Travels there is still something peculiar. Shut out from her bright beloved Paris, she gyrates round it in a wider or narrower circle. Haunted with danger, affliction, love of knowledge, and above all with *ennui*, she sets forth in her private carriage on two intermingled errands: first, 'to find noble characters;' secondly, 'to study national physiognomies.' The most distinguished female living will see face to face the most distinguished personages living, be they male or female; will have sweet counsel with them, or, in philosophic tourney, 'free passages of arms;' will gauge them with her physiognomical callipers, and, if so seem fit, print their dimensions in books. Not to study the charters, police, and economy of nations; to stand in

* From Fraser's Magazine, No. 26.

their council-halls, workshops, dress-shops, and social assemblages; least of all, to gaze on waterfalls, and ruined robber-towers, and low over them, as the cattle on a thousand hills can do, is she posting through the world: but to read the living book of man, as written in various tongues; nay, to read the chrestomathy and diamond edition of that living polyglot book of man, wherein, for clear eyes, all his subordinate performances, practices, and arrangements, or the best spirit of these, stand legible. It is a tour, therefore, not for this or that object of culture, this or that branch of wisdom; but for culture generally, for wisdom itself: and combines with this distinction that of being a true tour of knight-errantry, and search of spiritual adventures and feats of intellect,—the only knight-errantry practicable in these times. With such high-soaring views, Madame first penetrated into Germany in 1803; and could not miss Weimar, where the flower of intellectual Germany was then assembled.

The figure of such a three as Goethe, Schiller, and De Staël, to whom Wieland, Müller, and other giants, might be joined, rises beautiful in our imagination, and throws powder in the eyes; and perhaps, for merely poetic purposes, it were best if we left it invested with that rose-coloured cloud, and pried no deeper. But insatiable curiosity will nowise let the matter rest there; Science, as well as Fancy, must have its satisfaction. The 'spiritual Amazon' was a mortal woman; those philosophic joustings and symposia were also transacted on our common clay earth: behind that gorgeous arras, of which we see not the knotty side, who knows what vulgar, angular stone and mortar lies concealed! In the sixth volume of the *Correspondence between Schiller and Goethe*, lately published; still more, in the thirty-first volume of Goethe's *Works*, even now publishing, where, under the title of *Tag- und Jahres-Heft*, is a continuation of his Autobio-

graphy, we find some indications and disclosures. These the British world, for insight into this matter, shall now also behold, in juxta-position, if not in combination. Of Madame in London there are some sketches in Byron's Letters, but more in the way of daubing than of painting; done, too, not with philosophic permanent-colours, but with mere dandyic ochre and japan, which last were but indifferently applicable here. The following are in a more artistic style, and may be relied on as sincere and a real likeness.

We give the whole series of Notices, which we have translated, long and short, arranged according to the order of dates, beginning with the first note of distant preparation, and ending with the latest reminiscence. Goethe is, for the time, at Jena, engaged in laborious official duties of a literary kind, when, on the 30th of November, 1803, Schiller thus finishes a letter to him from Weimar:

'Madame de Staël is actually in Frankfort, and we 'may soon look for her here. If she but understand Ger- 'man, I doubt not we shall do our part; but to preach 'our religion to her in French phrases, and standing the 'brunt of French volubility, were too hard a problem. 'We should not get through so cleverly as Schelling did 'with Camille Jourdan. Farewell.'

The next will explain themselves:

Jena, 13th December, 1803.

'It was to be foreseen, that when Madame de Staël 'came to Weimar, I should be called thither. I have taken 'counsel with myself, that the moment might not surprise 'me, and determined on staying here. For the laborious 'and dubious business that now lies on me, whatever phy- 'sical force I have, especially in this bad month, will scan- 'tily suffice; from the intellectual surveyance down to the 'mechanical typographical department, I need to have it

'all before me. * * * * You, my dear friend, see, 'not without horror, what a case I am in; with Meyer, 'indeed, to comfort me, yet without help or complete 'fellow-feeling from any one: for whatever is so much as 'possible, our people look upon as easy. Wherefore, I 'entreat you, take my place; guide the whole matter for 'the best, so far as possible. If Madame de Staël please 'to visit me, she shall be well received. Let me but know 'four-and-twenty hours beforehand, and part of the Lodger 'apartments shall be furnished to lodge her; she will find 'a burgher's table, and welcome; we shall actually meet 'and speak together; she can stay while such remains her 'pleasure. What I have to do here is transacted in sepa- 'rate half-hours; the rest of my time shall be hers: but 'in this weather to go and to come, to dress, appear at 'court and in company, is, once for all, impossible, as 'decisively as ever you, in the like condition, have pro- 'nounced it.

'All this I commit to your friendly guidance, for there 'is nothing that would gratify me more than to see this 'distinguished lady, and personally make acquaintance 'with her; really glad were I, could she spend these two 'leagues of road on me. Worse quarters than await her 'here she has been used to by the way. Do you lead and 'manage these conditions with your delicate and kind 'hand, and send me an express when any thing decided 'occurs.

'Good speed to all that your solitude produces, as 'yourself could wish and will! For me, I am rowing in 'a foreign element; nay, I might say, only splashing and 'spluttering therein, with loss for the outward man, and 'without the smallest satisfaction for the inward or from 'the inward. But after all, if it be true, as Homer and 'Polygnotos teach me more and more, that we poor mor- 'tals have properly a kind of hell to enact in this earth of

'ours, such a life may pass among the rest. A thousand 'farewells in the celestial sense!

'GOETHE.'

'*Weimar*, 14*th December*, 1803.

'Against your reasons for not coming hither there is 'nothing solid to be urged; I have stated them with all 'impressiveness to the Duke. For Madame de Staël her- 'self, too, it must be much pleasanter to see you without 'that train of dissipation; and for yourself, under such an 'arrangement, this acquaintance may prove a real satis- 'faction, which were otherwise a burden not to be borne.

* * * * * * *

'Fare you heartily well; keep sound and cheerful, and 'deal gently with the Pilgrimess that wends towards you. 'When I hear more, you shall learn.

'SCHILLER.

'P.S. The Duke gives me answer that he will write to 'you himself, and speak with me in the Theatre.'

'*Weimar*, 21*st December*, 1803.

'The rapid and truly toilsome alternation of productive 'solitude* with formal society, and its altogether hetero- 'geneous dissipations, so fatigued me last week, that I 'absolutely could not take the pen, and left it to my wife 'to give you some picture of us.

'Madame de Staël you will find quite as you have, '*à priori*, construed her: she is all of one piece; there is

* Schiller was now busied with *Wilhelm Tell*; on which last and greatest of his Dramas this portion of the *Correspondence with Goethe* mainly turns.

'no adventitious, false, pathological speck in her. Hereby 'it is that, notwithstanding the immeasurable difference 'in temper and way of thought, one is perfectly at ease 'with her, can hear all from her, and say all to her. She 'represents French culture in its purity, and under a most 'interesting aspect. In all that we name philosophy, there- 'fore in all highest and ultimate questions, one is at issue 'with her, and remains so in spite of all arguing. But 'her nature, her feeling, is better than her metaphysics; 'and her fine understanding rises to the rank of genial. 'She insists on explaining every thing, on seeing into it, 'measuring it; she allows nothing dark, inaccessible; 'whithersoever her torch cannot throw its light, there no- 'thing exists for her. Hence follows an aversion, a horror, 'for the transcendental philosophy, which in her view leads 'to mysticism and superstition. This is the carbonic gas 'in which she dies. For what we call poetry there is no 'sense in her: from such works it is only the passionate, 'the oratorical, the intellectual, that she can appropriate; 'yet she will endure no falsehood there, only does not 'always recognise the true.

'You infer from these few words that the clearness, 'decidedness, and rich vivacity of her nature cannot but 'affect one favourably. Our only grievance is the alto- 'gether unprecedented glibness of her tongue: you must 'make yourself all ear, if you would follow her. Never- 'theless, as even I, with my small faculty of speaking 'French, get along quite tolerably with her, you, with 'your greater practice, will find communication very easy.

'My proposal were that you came over on Saturday; 'opened the acquaintance, and then returned on Sunday 'to your Jena business. If she stay longer than the new 'year, you will find her here; if she leave us sooner, she 'can still visit you in Jena before going.

'The great point at present is, that you hasten to get a

'sight of her, and so free yourself of the stretch of expect-
'ation. If you can come sooner than Saturday, so much
'the better.

'For the present, farewell. My labour has not, in-
'deed, advanced much this week, but also not stood still.
'It is truly a pity that this so interesting Phenomenon
'should have come upon us at the wrong season, when
'pressing engagements, bad weather, and the sad public
'occurrences over which one cannot rise quite triumphant,
'conspire to oppress us.

'SCHILLER.'

Goethe, having finished his work, returns to Weimar, but not in health. We find no mention of Madame till the 4th of January, and then only this:

* * * * 'Of the Lady de Staël I hear nothing:
'I hope she is busy with Benjamin Constant. What would
'I give for quietness, liberty, and health, through the next
'four weeks! I should then have almost done.

'SCHILLER.'

(*Apparently of the same date.*)

'Here come the new Periodicals, with the request that
'you would forward them, after use, to Meyer: especially
'I recommend No. 13 to notice. So there is nothing new
'under the sun? And did not our accomplished Pilgrimess
'assure me this morning, with the utmost *naïveté*, that
'whatever words of mine she could lay hold of, she meant
'to print. That story about *Rousseau's Letters** does her
'no good with me at present. One sees oneself and the

* This will explain itself afterwards.

'foolish French petticoat-ambition as in a diamond-ada-
'mant mirror. The best wishes for you.

'GOETHE.'

(*No date.*)

* * * 'Madame de Staël, in a note to my wife,
'this morning, speaks of a speedy departure, but also of a
'very probable return by Weimar. * * *

'SCHILLER.'

(*No date.*)

* * * 'Madame de Staël means to stay three
'weeks yet. Spite of all her French hurry, she will find,
'I fear, by her own experience, that we Germans in Wei-
'mar are also a changeful people,—that every guest should
'know when to be gone. * * *

'SCHILLER.'

(*No date.*)

* * 'De Staël I saw yesterday here, and shall
'see her again to-day with the Duchess's mother. It
'is the old story with her: one would think of the Da-
'naïdes' sieve, if Oknos† with his ass did not rather occur
'to one.

'SCHILLER.'

13*th January*, 1804.

* * * 'Be well and happy, and continue by
'your noble industry to give us a fresh interest in life:

---

† Oknos, a Greek gentleman, of date unknown, diligently plaits a reed rope, which his ass as diligently eats. This Oknos is supposed to have had *an unthrifty wife*. Hence Schiller's allusion.

'stand to it tightly in the Hades of company, and plait 'your reeds there into a right stiff rope, that there may be 'something to chew.——Greeting and hail!

'GOETHE.'

14th January.

* * * 'Your *Exposition* has refreshed me and 'nourished me. It is highly proper that by such an act, 'at this time, you express your contradiction of our im- 'portunate Visitress; the case would grow intolerable 'otherwise.

'Being sick at present, and gloomy, it seems to me 'impossible that I could ever hold such discourses again. 'It is positively a sin against the Holy Ghost to speak 'even one word according to her dialect. Had she taken 'lesson of Jean Paul, she would not have staid so long 'in Weimar: let her try it for other three weeks at her 'peril. * * * * *

'SCHILLER.'

24th January.

'To-day, for the first time, I have had a visit from 'Madame de Staël. It is still the same feeling: with all 'daintiness she bears herself rudely enough, as a traveller 'to Hyperboreans, whose noble old pines and oaks, whose 'iron and amber, civilised people indeed could turn to use 'and ornament.

'Meanwhile she forces you to bring out the old worn 'carpets, by way of guest-present, and the old rusty wea- 'pons to defend yourself withal.

'GOETHE.'

26th January.

* * * 'What are you busy with for to-day 'and to-morrow? That long-projected French reading of

'Madame de Staël's takes place, I hear, to-morrow even-
'ing. However, if you are at home then, and in the mood,
'I hereby invite myself, for I long much to see you.

'SCHILLER.'

'Madame de Staël was here to-day with Müller, and
'the Duke soon joined us; whereby the discourse grew
'very lively; and our first object, that of revising her
'Translation of *The Fisher*,† was rendered vain.

* * * * * *

'To-morrow evening, about five, Benjamin Constant
'is to be with me. If you can look in later, it will be
'kindly done. Wishing you sound sleep.

'GOETHE.'

8th February.

* * * 'If you can visit me to-night, pray
'mention to the bearer at what hour you would like the
'carriage.

'GOETHE.'

---

* * * 'Being in quite special tune for working
'to-day, I must make a long evening of it, and doubt
'whether I shall get out to you. Unhappily I have to
'struggle and make up beforehand for the loss of to-mor-
'row, being engaged to dine with Madame de Staël then.

'SCHILLER.'

---

† 'Das Wasser rauscht, das Wasser schwoll,
Ein Fischer sass daran;' &c.

—a celebrated little poem of Goethe's.

(*On, or after, the 21st of Feb.*)

* * * 'To-night we shall meet at Madame's. 'Yesterday we missed *you* sadly. Many a merry matter 'turned up, which we will laugh at by ourselves some day. 'SCHILLER.'

(*On, or after, the 12th of March.*)

'It is a right comfort to me that you offer to take 'charge of *Tell*. If I be in any tolerable state, I will cer- 'tainly come. Since I saw you last time at the rehearsal, 'I have not been at all well: the weather is not kind to 'me; besides, ever since the departure of Madame, I have 'felt no otherwise than as if I had risen from a severe 'sickness. 'SCHILLER.'

With clipping and piecing we have now done; but, by way of hem to this patchwork, subjoin the passage from Goethe's Autobiography* above referred to, which offers us a summary and brief synopsis of the whole circumstances,—written long afterwards, in that tone of cheerful gravity, combining the clearest insight with tolerance and kindly humour, to which no reader of his *Dichtung und Wahrheit* can be a stranger.

'Madame de Staël came to Weimar in the beginning 'of December, while I was still at Jena busied with the 'Programme. What Schiller wrote me on the 21st of that 'month served at once to instruct me touching the relation 'which her presence would give rise to.†

'As I could not move from Jena till my task were 'finished, there came tidings and delineations to me of 'many kinds how the lady bore herself and was received;

---

* *Werke*, b. xxxi. ss. 170-6.

† Here follows Schiller's Letter, which we have given already *sub dato*.

'and I could moderately well prescribe for myself the part 'I had to play: yet it all turned out quite otherwise, as 'in the next year, which we are now approaching, must 'be shewn.

* * * * * *

1804.

'Winter had come on with full violence, the roads were 'snowed up; without strong effort was no travelling. 'Madame de Staël announced herself more and more 'importunately. My business was concluded, and I re- 'solved for many reasons to return to Weimar; but this 'time, also, I felt the unwholesomeness of winter residence 'in the Castle. The so dear-bought experience of 1801 'had not made me wiser: I returned with a bad cold, 'which, without being dangerous, kept me some days in 'bed, and then weeks long in my room; on which ac- 'count, a part of this distinguished lady's stay was for me 'historical only, as I learned what happened in society 'from the narratives of friends; and afterwards too our 'personal intercourse had to be managed first by billets, 'then by dialogues, and, later still, in the smallest circle, '—perhaps the most favourable way both for learning 'what was in her, and imparting, so far as that might be, 'what was in me.

'With decisive vehemence she followed her purpose, 'to become acquainted with our circumstances, co-ordina- 'ting and subordinating them to her ideas; to inform her- 'self as much as possible concerning individuals; as a 'woman of the world, to gain clear views of our social 'relations; with her deep female spirit to penetrate and 'see through our general modes of representing Man and 'Nature, which is called our philosophy. Now, though I 'had no cause to simulate with her, as indeed, even when 'I let myself have free course, people do not always

'rightly interpret me; yet here there was an extraneous 'circumstance at work, that for the moment made me shy. 'I received, just at that time, a newly-published French 'book, containing the correspondence of two ladies with 'Rousseau.* On the secluded, inaccessible man, these 'fair intruders had played off a downright mystification, '—contriving to interest him in certain small concerns, 'and draw him into letter-writing; which letters, when 'they had enough of the joke, they lay together and send 'forth through the press.

'To Madame de Staël I expressed my dislike of the 'proceedings; she, however, took the matter lightly; nay 'seemed to applaud it, and not obscurely signified that 'she meant to deal with us much in the same way. There 'needed no more to put me on my guard, in some measure 'to seal me up.

'The great qualities of this high-thinking and high-'feeling authoress lie in the view of every one; and the 'results of her journey through Germany testify sufficiently how well she applied her time there.

'Her objects were manifold: she wished to know 'Weimar, to gain accurate acquaintance with its moral, 'social, literary aspects, and what else it offered; farther, 'however, she herself also wished to be known; and endeavoured therefore to give her own views currency, no 'less than to search out our way of thought. Neither 'could she rest satisfied even here: she must also work 'upon the senses, upon the feelings, the spirit; must 'strive to awaken a certain activity or vivacity, with the 'want of which she reproached us.

'Having no notion of what Duty means, and to what a 'silent, collected posture he that undertakes it must restrict himself, she was evermore for striking in, for in-

* See above, under date the 4th of January.

'stantaneously producing an effect. In society there must 'be constant talking and discoursing.

'The Weimar people are doubtless capable of some 'enthusiasm, perhaps occasionally of a false enthusiasm; 'but no French up-blazing was to be looked for from 'them; least of all at a time when the French political 'preponderance threatened all Europe, and calm-thinking 'men foresaw the inevitable mischief which, next year, 'was to lead us to the verge of destruction.

'In the way of public reading also, and reciting, did this 'lady strive for laurels. I excused myself from an even- 'ing party when she exhibited *Phèdre* in this fashion,* 'and where the moderate German plaudits nowise con- 'tented her.

'To philosophise in society, means to talk with vivacity 'about insoluble problems. This was her peculiar plea- 'sure and passion. Naturally too she was wont to carry 'it, in such speaking and counter-speaking, up to those 'concerns of thought and sentiment which properly should 'not be spoken of except between God and the individual. 'Here, moreover, as woman and Frenchwoman, she had the 'habit of sticking fast on main positions, and, as it were, 'not hearing rightly what the other said.

'By all these things the evil genius was awakened in 'me, so that I would treat whatever was advanced no 'otherwise than dialectically and problematically, and 'often, by stiff-necked contradictions, brought her to 'despair; wherein, truly, she for the first time grew 'rightly amiable, and in the most brilliant manner ex- 'hibited her talent of thinking and replying.

'More than once I had regular dialogues with her, 'ourselves two; in which likewise, however, she was bur- 'densome, according to her fashion; never granting, on 'the most important topics, a moment of reflection, but

* See above: date, 26th January.

'passionately demanding that you should despatch the 'deepest concerns, the weightiest occurrences, as lightly 'as if it were a game at shuttle-cock.

'One little instance, instead of many, may find place 'here:

'She stepped in, one evening before court-time, and 'said, as if for salutation, with warm vehemence, "I have 'important news to tell you: Moreau is arrested, with 'some others, and accused of treason against the Tyrant." 'I had long, as every one had, taken interest in the person 'of this noble individual, and followed his actions and 'attempts. I now silently called back the past, in order, 'as my way is, to try the present thereby, and deduce, or 'at least forecast, the future. The lady changed the con-'versation, leading it, as usual, on manifold indifferent 'things; and as I, persisting in my reverie, did not forth-'with answer her with due liveliness, she again reproached 'me, as she had often done, that this evening too, accord-'ing to custom, I was in the dumps (*maussade*), and no 'cheerful talk to be had with me. I felt seriously angry, 'declared that she was capable of no true sympathy, that 'she dashed in without note of warning, felled you with a 'club,—and next minute you must begin capering tunes for 'her, and jig from subject to subject.

'Such speeches were quite according to her heart: she 'wished to excite passion, no matter what. In order to 'appease me, she now went over all the circumstances of 'the above sorrowful mischance, and evinced therein great 'penetration into characters, and acquaintance with the 'posture of affairs.

'Another little story will prove likewise how gaily 'and lightly you might live with her, as you took it her 'own way:

'At a numerous supper-party with the Duchess Amelia, 'I was sitting far off her, and chanced this time also to be 'taciturn and rather meditative. My neighbours reproved

'me for it, and there rose a little movement, the cause of 'which at length reached up to the higher personages. 'Madame de Staël heard the accusation of my silence; 'expressed herself regarding it in the usual terms, and 'added, "On the whole, I never like Goethe till he has 'had a bottle of champagne." I said half-aloud, so that 'those next me could hear, "I suppose, then, we have 'often got a little *elevated* together." A moderate laugh 'ensued. She wanted to know the cause. No one could, 'or would, give a French version of my words in their 'proper sense; till at last Benjamin Constant, one of those 'near me, undertook, as she continued asking and impor- 'tuning, to satisfy her by some euphonistic phrase, and so 'terminate the business.

'But whatever, on reflection, one may think or say of 'these proceedings, it is ever to be acknowledged that, in 'their results, they have been of great importance and 'influence. That Work on Germany, which owed its 'origin to such social conversations, must be looked on as 'a mighty implement, whereby, in the Chinese Wall of 'antiquated prejudices which divided us from France, a 'broad gap was broken; so that across the Rhine, and, in 'consequence of this, across the Channel, our neighbours 'at last took closer knowledge of us; and now the whole 'remote West is open to our influences. Let us bless those 'annoyances, therefore, and that conflict of national pecu- 'liarities, which at the time seemed unseasonable, and no- 'wise promised us furtherance.'

END OF VOL. III.

LONDON: PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,
46 St. Martin's Lane.

00097686

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016